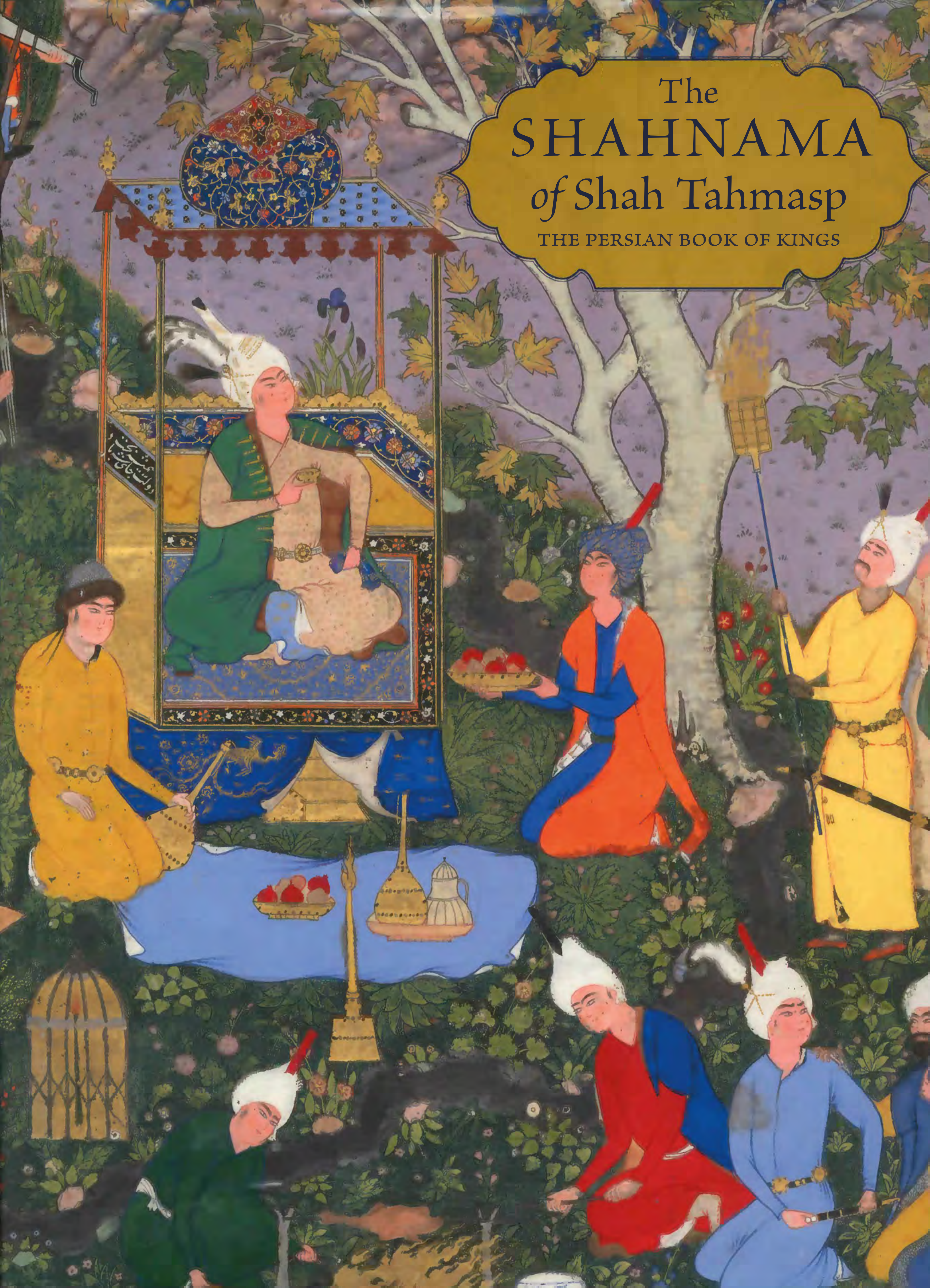
The SHAHNAMA of Shah Tahmasp

THE PERSIAN BOOK OF KINGS



The SHAHNAMA *of* Shah Tahmasp

THE PERSIAN BOOK OF KINGS

Sheila R. Canby

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London

This publication is made possible through the generosity of the Iranian-American community.

Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief
Gwen Roginsky, Associate Publisher and General Manager of Publications
Peter Antony, Chief Production Manager
Michael Sittenfeld, Managing Editor
Robert Weisberg, Senior Project Manager

Publication coordinated by Santiago Saavedra and Lucía Varela, Ediciones El Viso, Madrid

Edited by Marcie M. Muscat
Designed by María José Subiela with additional design by Miko McGinty and Carl W. Scarbrough
Production by Christopher Zichello
Bibliography edited by Penny Jones

Gold stamping on the front and back covers designed by Tony Mullin, Miko McGinty Inc., with Deniz Beyazit, based on the original binding of the *Shahnama* of Shah Tashmasp and the illumination *In Praise of God and the Intellect* (fol. 16v)

Photographs of works in the Metropolitan Museum's collection are by The Photograph Studio, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; new photography of the Museum's folios is by Katherine Dahab. Additional photography credits appear on p. 359.

Typeset in ITC Galliard
Printed on 150 gsm Furioso
Separations by Lucam, Madrid
Printed by Brizzolis, Madrid
Bound by Encuadernación Ramos, Madrid

Cover illustration: *Barbad the Concealed Musician* (fol. 731r, detail); p. 1: *Faridun Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna* (fol. 7r, detail); p. 2: *Kay Khusrau Is Discovered by Giv* (fol. 210v, detail); p. 4: *Manuchihr Raises Tur on His Lance* (fol. 55v, detail); pp. 10–11: *Rustam Recovers Rakhsh from Afrasiyab's Herd* (fol. 295r, detail); p. 12: *The Court of Gayumars* (fol. 20v, detail); p. 19: *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the King of Hind* (fol. 638r, detail); p. 20: *The Feast of Sada* (fol. 22v, detail); p. 360: *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud* (fol. 513v, detail)

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First printing

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10028
metmuseum.org

Distributed by
Yale University Press, New Haven and London
yalebooks.com/art
yalebooks.co.uk

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-58839-530-6
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
ISBN 978-0-300-19454-8
(Yale University Press)

CONTENTS

Sponsor's Statement
6

Director's Foreword
7

Acknowledgments
8

Note to the Reader
9

Introduction
13

The Material World of Shah Tahmasp
21

The *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp
THE PERSIAN BOOK OF KINGS
61

Dramatis Personæ
324

Notes on Folios
334

Selected Bibliography
358

Photography Credits
359

Sponsor's Statement

Firdausi's *Shahnama*, or Book of Kings, relates in more than 50,000 verses the magical, mystical history of Iran's pre-Islamic era. It is a proud, monumental epic of real and legendary kings surrounded by a wondrous cast of heroes and lovers and mythical beasts. The work was composed ten centuries ago and painstakingly copied by hand, then passed down over the generations. Sometimes, particularly when commissioned for royal libraries, a manuscript contained elaborate miniature paintings recounting the stories in pictures as well as in narrative verse.

Never were these illuminations so majestically realized as in the version known as the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp (1514–1576). Universally recognized as the greatest of all Iranian illustrated manuscripts, perhaps of any culture or period, it was produced over two decades by the largest gathering of artists, illustrators, scribes, gilders, and pigment and paper makers ever assembled in one place to execute a single book. In its splendor and artistic achievement, the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* remains unsurpassed as both the apogee of Persian miniature painting and a culmination of the arts of the book.

Today, the folios of the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* reside in public and private collections on three continents. The present volume is the last in a series of three editions published over two years that have brought together these pages once again, thanks to a collaborative endeavor between the Iranian-American community and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Since 2007, the NoRuz at the Met Committee has raised funds to support the preservation, promotion, and public presentation of the arts of Iran. Some of those funds have underwritten this volume and its sister publications, the preparation of which has involved locating and digitally photographing all the folios held in public museums and private collections.

One can only dream that someday all of the folios of the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* will be reunited and reassembled in the original binding. Perhaps this project will galvanize support to do just that. Until then, the book you are holding is a worthy substitute.

The NoRuz at the Met Committee

Director's Foreword

The publication of this book marks 1,004 years since the completion of the *Shahnama*, the Persian national epic, which was written down in more than 50,000 couplets by the poet Firdausi. It also celebrates the most lavishly illustrated version of this text, a manuscript produced for the Safavid Shah Tahmasp, who ruled Iran from 1524 to 1576. The Metropolitan Museum is fortunate to own 78 of the 258 illustrations to this text, a selection of which is on view in the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Gallery of Later Persian Art.

Thanks to the generosity of the Iranian-American community and the annual NoRuz at the Met Benefit it has held in recent years at the Museum, all of the illustrations to Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* were published in color for the first time in 2011 in a single-volume limited edition. The present volume, which includes an extended introduction and a concise synopsis of each narrative episode, will enable a broader audience to appreciate this exceptional manuscript. Held in collections across North America, Europe, and the Middle East, these illustrations may never again be physically reunited, making this book an important resource for lovers of sixteenth-century Persian painting.

By printing a facsimile of the illustrations, we hope that readers will experience some of the wonder that the young Tahmasp must have felt when he opened his manuscript. The original book was large, but not too big to lift. Inside its covers, stories and pictures of battles and trysts, kings and heroes, would have unfolded as he turned the pages. Iranians still know every twist and turn of many of these tales. For those unfamiliar with the *Shahnama,* its vividly painted illustrations provide an excellent introduction.

I would like to extend my thanks to the NoRuz at the Met Committee, whose love of and desire to promote Persian art and culture has resulted in a number of important initiatives at the Museum, but none may be as close to the hearts of all Iranians as the publication of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*.

Thomas P. Campbell

DIRECTOR

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the NoRuz at the Met Committee for its generous support of *The "Shahnama" of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings*. Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani, Morad Tahbaz, and Jamshid Ehsani were particularly active in working with the Editorial Department and the Department of Islamic Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art to ensure the timely publication of this volume. Jeanne Hardy-Sloan and Deniz Beyazit of the Department of Islamic Art assumed the complex task of locating all of the dispersed pages of the manuscript. Deniz also managed many other details, organizing a great wealth of material and corresponding with the publisher and the owners of folios. Without her involvement the book would have foundered. Jude Ahern and the family of Stuart Cary Welch spent time and effort finding slides of illustrations, and Marcus Fraser in London was a great help with identifying folios in private collections. Thanks also are due to Leslee Michelson at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar, and to Elena Chardaklyska at the Islamic Manuscript Association in Cairo for their help sourcing images for this book.

Santiago Saavedra with Gonzalo Saavedra and their team at Ediciones El Viso have underpinned this endeavor with their expertise, taste, and patience. Mark Polizzotti, Gwen Roginsky, Peter Antony, Michael Sittenfeld, Elizabeth Zechella, Marcie Muscat, and Christopher Zichello in the Museum's Editorial Department have been exemplary in guiding this book to completion, while María José Subiela, Miko McGinty, and Carl W. Scarbrough all contributed to its elegant and thoughtful design. Katherine Dahab has expeditiously photographed all of the Museum's folios, with the assistance of Timothy Caster, Annick Des Roches, and Kent Henricksen. Conservators Yana Van Dyke and Valérie Faivre cleaned and stabilized the folios in the Metropolitan's collection, bringing their breathtaking beauty to the fore.

Sheila R. Canby

PATTI CADBY BIRCH CURATOR IN CHARGE

DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC ART

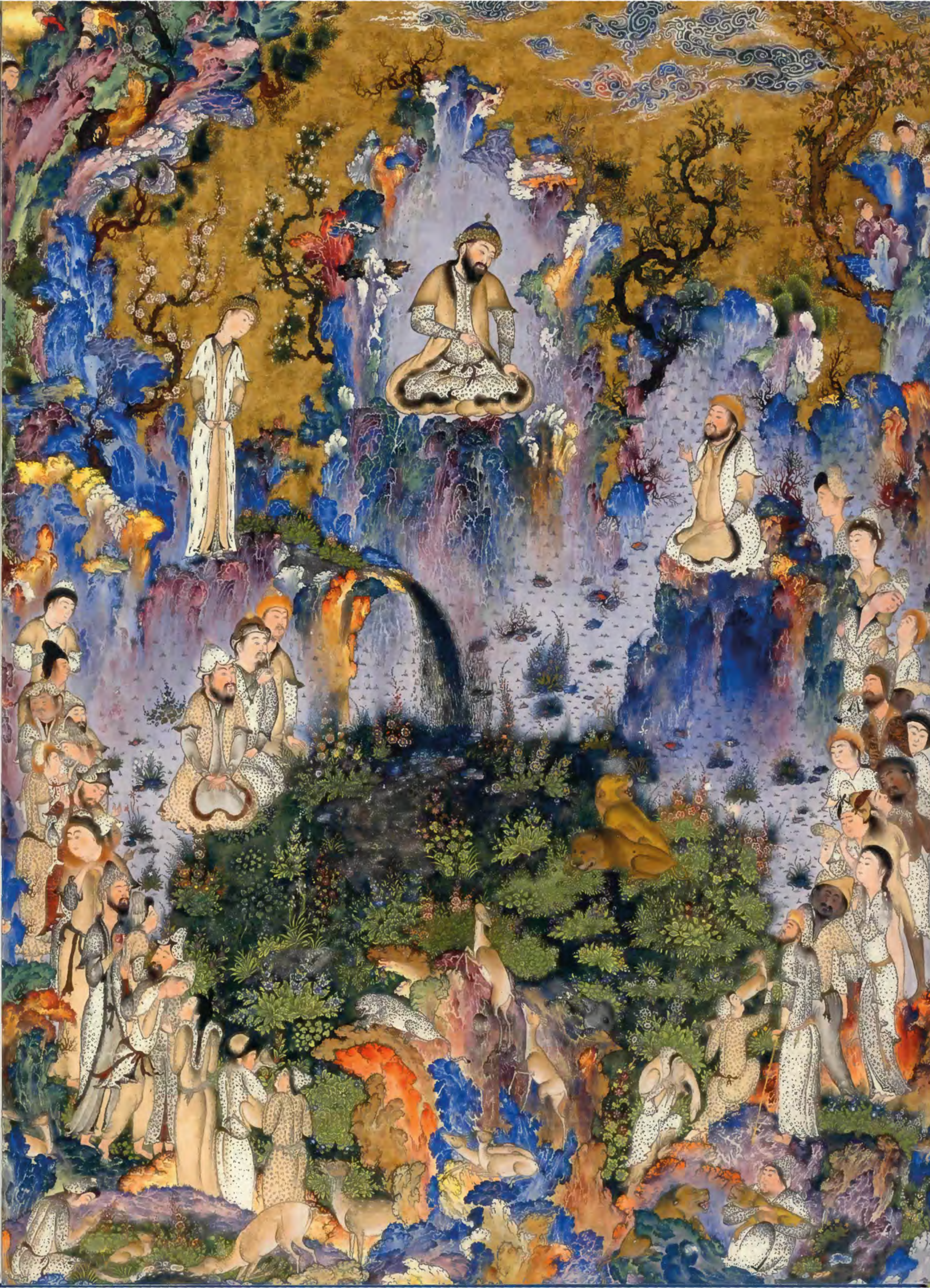
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Note to the Reader

The transliteration from Persian to English follows the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* with the exception that diacritics have been omitted. The letter ʻayn is represented by ʻ, and the letter hamza by ʼ.

The attributions to artists and the titles of illustrations follow those of Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch from *The Houghton Shahnameh*. These titles reflect both the subject matter of the illustration and the illuminated titles (rubrics) included throughout the text.

The folio dimensions in the original *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp vary slightly, averaging 18 ½ x 12 ½ in. (47 x 31.8 cm). This book reproduces the folios at approximately three-quarter scale and excludes part of the decorative margin, allowing the paintings to be shown at the greatest possible scale.



INTRODUCTION

The *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp

Sheila R. Canby

One thousand and four years ago, Abu'l Qasim Firdausi of Tus completed the towering monument of Persian literature, the *Shahnama*, or Book of Kings. This epic poem, consisting of between forty and sixty thousand rhyming couplets, recounts the history of Iran before Islam, from its mythic, prehistoric beginnings to the end of the Sasanian empire in A.D. 642. Organized by the successive reigns of Iran's kings, the *Shahnama* emphasizes the divine right of kings and the established order of society, in which loyalty to the king is paramount. Like other lengthy narratives, its text revolves around tales of war and love, monsters and heroes, kings and courtiers. The colorful personages and the dramatic events in which they are involved have ensured the continuing popularity of the epic for a millennium. Not only do Iranians still name their children after characters in the poem, but actors recite its verses on the radio and its stories appear in comic books. The emotional and philosophical situations described in the *Shahnama* remain as true today as in 1010, rendering the poem as essential to the national identity of Iranians as the *Mahabharata* is to Indians.

After a period of Arab domination and the introduction of the Arabic language and script to Iran, the *Shahnama* marks a revival of the Persian language. The poem is praised to this day for the purity of its Persian vocabulary and minimal use of Arabic loan words. As Firdausi himself recounted, the poem was begun by the poet Daqiqi, also from the northeastern Iranian world, but he was murdered by his slave, and Firdausi took over the project. Firdausi spent thirty-five years composing the epic and presented it to the most powerful ruler of his day, Mahmud of Ghazna, a Central Asian Turk who presided over a vast territory that included Khurasan province, much of Central Asia, Afghanistan, and northern India. As scholars have noted, Firdausi had originally planned to seek the patronage of one of the Samanid rulers of Khurasan, who were the first indigenous Iranian rulers of Iran since the Arab invasion.[1] However, by the time the poem was completed, the might of the Samanids had shrunk and Mahmud had risen to power. Given the negative portrayal of Turks in the *Shahnama*, Mahmud's less-than-desired payment to Firdausi for his labors is not surprising. Nonetheless, Mahmud eventually recognized the magnitude of Firdausi's accomplishment.

Although Firdausi would have drawn from the poetry of Daqiqi, the Zoroastrian *Avesta*, a Persian translation from Pahlavi of a prose *Shahnama*, and oral histories and legends of Iran, very few illustrations of these stories appear in Iranian art before Islam. The earliest extant text of Firdausi's *Shahnama* dates to 1217, and the illustration of *Shahnama* manuscripts commenced only about 1300. While well-known tales, such as those of Bahram Gur and Azada or Bizhan hunting boars, appear on Sasanian silver dishes, six centuries passed before early thirteenth-century makers of lusterware tiles and *mina'i* ceramics started to include verses and images of episodes from the *Shahnama* on their wares. This lapse is not well understood, but fifth- to sixth-century Soghdian wall paintings from Panjikent (modern Tajikistan) indicate that the imagery later

incorporated in the *Shahnama* decorated the walls of ceremonial halls, a practice that may have continued unabated in early Islamic Iran.

The incentive to start illustrating manuscripts of the *Shahnama* is believed to have come from the Ilkhanid rulers of Iran. These Mongol conquerors had ravaged the country in the first half of the thirteenth century, but by the 1290s they had converted to Islam and settled down, building capitals in such cities as Tabriz and Maragha in the northwest. The Ilkhanid rulers soon adopted the trappings of courtly sophistication, including the commissioning of major architectural monuments, large-scale Qur'ans, and illustrated manuscripts. While several small-scale illustrated *Shahnamas* were produced about 1300 for unidentified patrons, the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, completed about 1335 and now dispersed, represents the first major milestone in the history of illustrated *Shahnamas*. What would have motivated the Ilkhanid ruler to commission such a manuscript? Although the Mongols had ruled Iran for more than a century, such a gesture may have indicated a desire to press their claims as the legitimate heirs to the tradition of Iranian kingship. Perhaps the very internecine struggles that would bring Ilkhanid rule to an end soon after the completion of the illustrated Mongol *Shahnama* made the necessity to prove their right to rule all the more urgent. Following the *Compendium of Chronicles*, an illustrated history of the world written by the vizier Rashid al-Din in the first two decades of the fourteenth century and distributed throughout Iran, the images in the *Shahnama* exhibit a growing pictorial complexity and expressiveness that would continue to inform Persian book painting long after the fall of the Ilkhanids.

While the Great Mongol *Shahnama* was almost certainly commissioned by the ruler Abu Sa'id (r. 1317–35) or his vizier Ghiyath al-Din, regional potentates in places such as Shiraz also ordered illustrated copies of the manuscript in the 1330s and 1340s. We have less evidence for the production of illustrated *Shahnamas* in the second half of the fourteenth century, but the Timurid conquest of Iran in 1395 and the appointment of various Timurid princes to the governorships of Shiraz, Herat, and Isfahan in the early fifteenth century revived the pattern of royal patronage of illustrated manuscripts. At least three Timurid princes, Ibrahim Sultan, Baisunghur, and Muhammad Juki, commissioned deluxe illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts. None of these princes acceded to the Timurid throne, which raises the question of whether their *Shahnamas* represented an aspiration to kingship, a confirmation of political legitimacy as princes of a Turkish dynasty ruling a land of Persians, or simply desirable accoutrements of princely bibliophiles. Baisunghur wrote a new preface to the *Shahnama* that first appeared in his copy of the manuscript. To a certain extent, the *Shahnama* of Firdausi can be considered a "mirror for princes," a text with stories elucidating the role of the prince in society and in his relationship to the king. For this reason, even if the royal Timurid illustrated *Shahnamas* were not made to mark a specific historical occasion, they were entirely appropriate possessions for the libraries of their princely owners.

The reach of Timurid power gradually constricted over the course of the fifteenth century so that by the 1490s two successive Turkmen dynasties, the Qara Quyunlu and the Aq Quyunlu, held sway over most of central and western Iran, Baghdad, and eastern Anatolia. In Turkmen-controlled Shiraz, the commercial production of illustrated *Shahnamas* thrived. The painting style of many of these Shiraz manuscripts was a simplified version of Timurid court painting from Herat, with doll-like figures and bright colors but little individuality of characters or complexity of settings. Not only were illustrated *Shahnamas* from Shiraz sold to Iranians, but they were exported as well to Turkey and India, where their pictorial style influenced the local artists. Since these manuscripts were commercially produced, the clientele who acquired them were presumably well-off but not royal. Their reason for owning an illustrated *Shahnama* must have stemmed not from a notion of royal birthright but from a desire to possess a copy of the well-known national epic of Iran and perhaps from the social aspiration to have what a prince would own.

In the period immediately before the Safavid conquest of 1501 and the subsequent reunification of Turkmen and Timurid Iran, one illustrated *Shahnama* may hold a clue to why the book again became prominent at court. In A.H. 899/A.D. 1493–94, Isma'il Safavi, the seven-year-old heir to the leadership of the Ardabil Shrine of Shaikh Safi al-Din and future shah of Iran, took refuge in Lahijan, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. In the same year, a two-volume *Shahnama* with illustrations by a number of artists working in the Turkmen style was completed at the behest of the local ruler, 'Ali Mirza Karkiya. Whether or not the manuscript was intended as a gift for the young Isma'il, he most likely studied and enjoyed its colorfully direct and often dramatic pictures. For Isma'il, the book may well have served as an introduction to the privileges and responsibilities of Iranian kingship. And just as his own poetry reflects an ecstatic belief in his divinely ordained role as the spiritual guide of the Shi'i Muslims, the notion of the aura of kingship, or *farr*, which also depends on the idea of a divine right, is one of the main themes of the *Shahnama*.

About 1515, after a decade and a half in power, Shah Isma'il commissioned an illustrated *Shahnama*. This manuscript was

Fig. 1. Detail of folio 521v: *The Story of Haftvad and the Worm*

never completed and only three of its illustrations are known. Most likely the work of Sultan Muhammad, a Tabriz artist who had started his career at the Aq Quyunlu Turkmen court, the illustrations are a continuation of the late fifteenth-century royal Turkmen style, which is characterized by the minute scale of its elements, the massing and overlapping of figures or landscape features, the intensity and beauty of its palette, and occasional spatial anomalies. The reason for the abandonment of this manuscript project is disputed. Stuart Cary Welch proposed that it was begun about 1520 and intended for Prince Tahmasp (1514–1576), Shah Isma'il's oldest son who was then, as a six-year-old, serving as nominal governor of the former Timurid capital Herat. Welch believed that Tahmasp rejected the manuscript because the style of its miniatures was too unlike the Herat style to which he was accustomed. An alternative argument is that Shah Isma'il ordered the manuscript to commemorate the birth of Tahmasp in 1514, but the project was abandoned in 1516 when Tahmasp left for Herat and Isma'il turned to his real passions, drinking and hunting.

In 1522, Tahmasp returned to Tabriz, having spent most of his childhood in Herat, a city associated with the highly refined poetry, calligraphy, and painting of the Timurid court of Sultan Husain Baiqara (r. 1470–1506). The passage of time and the fall of the city to the Uzbeks in 1507 accounted for the loss of some of Herat's luminaries, but a few key figures, such as the artist Bihzad, remained in the city and apparently came into contact with Tahmasp. Upon Tahmasp's relocation to Tabriz, his education continued and he began studying painting with Sultan Muhammad. About this time, Bihzad was summoned to Tabriz to become head of the ***kitabkhana***, the royal library and scriptorium in which manuscripts were produced. When Shah Isma'il died in 1524, Tahmasp acceded to the throne. As a boy of ten, Tahmasp had limited power to run the government and was forced to rely on a succession of self-serving Qizilbash tribal leaders who acted as his guardian. The Qizilbash consisted of various Turkmen tribes who had given their allegiance to Shah Isma'il in his conquest of Iran and establishment of Shiism as the state religion, but who had jockeyed for power in the absence of strong leadership.

Defensive and sedentary by nature, Shah Tahmasp was demonstrably more interested in art than his father. As a result, he presided over the production of the most opulent and

Fig. 2. Detail of folio 23v: *Tahmuras Defeats the Divs*

exquisitely illustrated of all *Shahnama* manuscripts. Whether the book was commissioned by Shah Isma'il about 1522 in response to Tahmasp's rejection of the earlier Turkmen-style *Shahnama* or by Tahmasp to mark his accession to the throne, the manuscript is firmly associated with the patronage of Shah Tahmasp. It contains 258 illustrations and 759 folios bound in gilded leather. Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, who published the two-volume study of the manuscript in 1981,[2] have proposed that a team of fifteen painters, two calligraphers, at least two illuminators, one or more bookbinders, and countless gold sprinklers, margin rulers, and paper burnishers produced the manuscript between about 1522 and 1537, with two additional paintings from about 1540.[3] They have posited three phases of production, each under a different artistic director—Sultan Muhammad until about 1527, Mir Musavvir until about 1532, and Aqa Mirak until about 1537. During this time, the elderly Bihzad was head of the royal library but most likely provided general supervision to the project rather than illustrations in his own hand. Essentially, Tahmasp's *Shahnama* served as incubator and proving ground for two generations of Safavid artists and is the locus for the synthesis of the two painting styles that coexisted in Iran at the start of the sixteenth century, those of Turkmen Tabriz and Timurid Herat.

The illustrations in this manuscript include those conceived and executed by single painters and those attributed to a main artist and an assistant. Because the narrative of the *Shahnama* contains so many accounts of battles, these were often assigned to the assistants. In addition, even the most talented artists produced works ranging in complexity from multifigure compositions to simple interpretations of the relevant episode. The manuscript contained only two signed illustrations, one by Mir Musavvir and the other, added about 1540, by Dust Muhammad (FIG. 1). Only one painting, folio 516v, contains a date,

A.H. 934/A.D. 1527–28, which is of vital importance, since the colophon of the manuscript is missing.

An examination of four illustrations provides a brief insight into the stylistic development of manuscript painting in the first fifteen years of Shah Tahmasp's reign. In *Tahmuras Defeats the Divs* (fol. 23v), Sultan Muhammad displays hallmarks of his native Turkmen tradition. Before a flowering landscape, Tahmuras leans over the neck of his bounding horse to bash a demon on the head with his mace (FIG. 2). The kitelike clouds with trailing tails, the stubby, bare shrubs with contorted branches, and the leaves with dark green centers and yellowish edges all derive from the repertoire of Turkmen court painting. Likewise, the white horse on the horizon at the right that appears to float in midair evinces a Turkmen lack of concern regarding spatial verisimilitude. The treatment of color in the rocks, one tone seemingly melting into another, and the expressive and humorous range of the demons' poses reveal the particular mastery of Sultan Muhammad. Moreover, the painterly rendering of the grotesque faces of the demons so that their skin appears scabrous and hairy and the contrast with the fine brushwork in other passages demonstrate the great control of this artist.

Sultan Muhammad's masterpiece, reported to have caused other artists to hang their heads in shame, depicts the first Iranian king, Gayumars, and his court (folio 20v and detail, p. 12). Seated on a rocky throne, Gayumars turns to his son Siyamak after having been informed by the angel Surush, standing at the left, of his son's impending death at the hand of the evil Ahriman. The composition forms an oval, with Gayumars's subjects, dressed in leopard skins, arrayed in a row rising at the right and left. At the left, the rocky outcrop pierces the gold-specked margin. As in the painting of Tahmuras, one pigment appears to merge with another in the rocks. Here, however, the rocks themselves teem with hidden faces of men and animals. The excesses of Turkmen painting have been somewhat tamed, and the clouds now streak across the sky more naturalistically. Welch has suggested that the presence of Bihzad at Tahmasp's court may have exerted a strong influence on Sultan Muhammad, leading to more rational placement of figures in space and a slightly more sober palette. In fact, the result of this interaction was a synthesis that was far greater than the sum of its parts, thanks to the ineffable combination of Sultan Muhammad's supreme artistic skill and the spirituality of his vision.

The origins of Mir Musavvir are unclear from the written sources, but his paintings are stylistically and temperamentally more in tune with Herat than Tabriz painting. *Ardashir and the Slave Girl Gulnar* (fol. 516v) depicts a tryst in an elegant tiled interior. The figures nestle under a blanket on a bedroll that lies on a shaped carpet atop a platform (FIG. 3). Not only is every detail precisely rendered, but a different tile pattern also defines each architectural element. While the S-curve of the flowering tree at the upper left and the snail-like clouds recall Turkmen painting, the emphasis on geometry in the composition and in individual patterns is allied to Timurid painting from Herat. Mir Musavvir uses these elements to provide a setting in which charming touches, such as the two pairs of shoes tucked under the platform or the dangling rope that Gulnar used to climb into Ardashir's chamber, intensify the romance of the scene. Dated A.H. 934/A.D. 1527–28, this painting may have signified the start of Mir Musavvir's directorship of the *Shahnama* project.

Fig. 3. Detail of folio 516v: *Ardashir and the Slave Girl Gulnar*

Some illustrations, such as folio 7r, *Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna* (FIG. 4), were painted long after the beginning of the project even though they appear early

Fig. 4. Detail of folio 7r: *Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna*

in the manuscript. Aqa Mirak, to whom this painting is attributed, came from a notable Isfahani family and became a close companion of Shah Tahmasp and the third director of the *Shahnama*. Along with other members of his generation in the ***kitabkhana***—Mir Sayyid 'Ali (son of Mir Musavvir), Mirza 'Ali (son of Sultan Muhammad), Dust Muhammad, and Muzaffar 'Ali—Aqa Mirak worked in the new style associated with the court of Shah Tahmasp. Attributes of this mode include figures larger in scale than those of Sultan Muhammad and Mir Musavvir, extreme precision of line, coloristic harmony, and an increased interest in the accurate portrayal of everything from textile patterns to vessels, tools, weapons, and furniture. Aqa Mirak's compositions are often set on an angle, as in the painting of Firdausi and the poets, or they contain an imbalance that is resolved through the dynamic relationship of the figures. Two of the youngest artists to work on the *Shahnama*, Shaikh Muhammad and 'Abd al-Samad, went on to successful careers at the Safavid and Mughal courts, respectively, modifying their style to suit the tastes of new patrons. Although Shah Tahmasp's enthusiasm for book painting eventually waned, the impact of his *Shahnama* and the artists who illustrated it reverberated throughout the sixteenth century, both in Iran and in Mughal India, where artists from Tahmasp's court founded the royal school of painting and forged the new Mughal style.

The manuscript itself changed hands several times before being split up in the 1970s. In 1568, Shah Tahmasp presented it in its jeweled outer covers to the Ottoman sultan Selim II. An Ottoman court official in 1801 wrote synopses of the scenes on sheets of paper that were inserted in the manuscript facing each illustration. These are now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The manuscript remained in the Ottoman royal library until sometime before 1903, when Baron Edmund de Rothschild bought it. In 1959, he sold it to Arthur A. Houghton Jr. The manuscript remained intact until 1970, when Houghton presented 78 of its illustrations to the Metropolitan Museum. Further folios from the now-dismantled manuscript were sold by the art dealers Agnew's and auctioned at Christie's in London in 1976. While Houghton sold some other folios before his death in 1990, his heirs subsequently traded the binding, text, and remaining 118 illustrations with the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art for a painting by Willem de Kooning that was then sold. The credit lines of the captions in this book testify to the extent to which the manuscript has been dispersed. Its folios will never be reunited, but at least they can meet again as pages in a modern book.

NOTES

1 Firuza Abdullaeva and Charles Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings: Ibrahim Sultan's "Shahnama"* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008), p. 17.

2 Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 3–7 and ff.

3 While some of the dates suggested by Dickson and Welch are debatable, their narrative of how the style of Safavid painting evolved over the range of illustrations in Tahmasp's *Shahnama* has remained largely unchallenged. One of the aims of this book is to rekindle scholarly interest in the manuscript by publishing the illustrations in color rather than black and white, as in Dickson and Welch's volumes.

The Material World of Shah Tahmasp

Sheila R. Canby

The 258 illustrations of the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp incorporate myriad details of the world, not of ancient Iran, but of the period in which the manuscript was produced, the first half of the sixteenth century. In addition to flora and fauna, numerous man-made objects in the paintings provide an insight into the tools, tableware, musical instruments, textiles, arms and armor, architectural decoration, and household goods that would have been in use in early Safavid Iran. Some of these items can be identified with existing pieces in museum and private collections, whereas others are known only from their appearance in this *Shahnama* and other manuscripts. For example, numerous metal objects in enthronement and other court scenes appear to be made of silver or gold encrusted with gems. While very few early Safavid gold or silver tablewares have survived, extant brass pieces in shapes comparable to those in the paintings suggest that metalworkers emulated the luxury wares made for the court in goods produced for the market. This evidence implies that the material world depicted in the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp was predominantly that of early sixteenth-century Iran, and that its artists were not worried about anachronism. As with representations of individual characters in the narrative, specific objects that appear repeatedly may have been rendered as types but with definable subgroups within each class. In the following essay the objects found in the *Shahnama* are identified, compared when possible with extant pieces, and discussed within their Safavid social context. Although we may never know how much artistic license was exercised in the depiction of these objects, their role in the illustrations to this manuscript is key for setting the scene in a way that would have been understandable to Shah Tahmasp and his contemporaries.

Bazm: Feasting and Drinking in the *Shahnama*

The concept of *bazm u razm*, feasting and fighting, has a very long history in Iran and is essential to the *Shahnama*, with its cycles of war punctuated by festive social gatherings. In the Safavid period, particularly during the reign of Shah Tahmasp's father, Shah Isma'il I (r. 1501–24), Qizilbash warriors prided themselves on their valor and devotion to their leader on the battlefield, and their equally intense, wild revelry that included excessive wine drinking, dancing, and sex with youths. For the first eight years of his reign, Shah Tahmasp apparently followed the example of his father's court, before forswearing alcohol in 1532–33 in an Edict of Sincere Repentance.[1] Thus, the scenes in the *Shahnama* involving wine drinking conform to events as they occurred in the 1520s at the Safavid court. Although the Italian traveler Michele Membré's eyewitness report of how such parties were organized dates from 1539, after Shah Tahmasp's edict, the placement of guests in the *Shahnama* illustrations reflects his description of a party hosted by Bahram Mirza, Shah Tahmasp's brother:

Fig. 1. Dragon-handled jug with inscription. Afghanistan, probably Herat, late 15th–first quarter of the 16th century. Brass; cast and turned, engraved, and inlaid with silver, gold, and black organic compound, height 5⅝ in. (14.3 cm), diam. of rim 3⅜ in. (8.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.607)

Fig. 2. Detail of folio 52v: *The Envoy Returns to Salm and Tur*

[There were] instruments: tambours, psalteries and flutes, *dunbaks* [single-ended drums] and a small lyre; and a very handsome boy who sang very well to the instruments. . . . And on the night when Bahram Mirza summoned me to his repast, as I have said, those three boys were seated on one side, and the others, that is, his *parvanachi* [official messenger] and the other two, his *sufrachis* [table-stewards], on the other side; the musicians on another side and he himself facing the said 'Ali Jan. They were all thus seated on fine carpets . . . behind his apartments to the north towards the garden.[2]

Here the men spent the evening feasting and drinking (Bahram Mirza disregarded the shah's prohibition on alcohol but indulged only in private) until eventually Bahram Mirza became drunk and went to sleep on the carpet. A painting such as folio 60v, depicting Manuchihr in a garden pavilion with musicians on one carpet and guests on another, corresponds closely to Membré's account.

Banquet scenes and other convivial gatherings invariably include long-necked bottles, alone or set on low-rimmed platters with jugs and cups. The standard shape consists of a spherical or ovoid body with an extremely long, narrow neck

Fig. 3. Long-necked flask with stopper. Iran, early 16th century. Zinc; partially gilt with applied gold, niello, turquoise, rubies, and emeralds, height 20½ in. (52 cm). Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul (2/2875)

Fig. 4. Detail of folio 35r: *The Feast of Faridun and Kundrau*

Fig. 5. Detail of folio 638r: *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the King of Hind*

Fig. 6. Moon flask (*bianhu*). China, Jingdezhen, Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Yongle period, 1403–24. Porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, 9⅞ x 5⅞ in. (25 x 15 cm). The British Museum, London, Bequeathed by Mrs. Walter Sedgwick, 1968 (1968,0422.29)

and a bulb-shaped stopper. The proportions of this type of bottle are particularly evident when viewed in the hands of a servant, for the neck is nearly the length of a man's torso (fol. 80v). While gold bottles predominate, silver bottles of the same shape also appear, for example, in folios 22v, 41v, 175v, and 655v, but the kings are served only from gold bottles. The decoration ranges from fluting and incised or modeled key motifs to inlay with a dark material, as well as colored decoration that might be inlaid stones or, less plausibly, enamel. The most opulent gold bottles are encrusted with rubies, turquoise, and pearls (fol. 385v). Often these bottles sit next to shorter jugs with high, wide necks, bulbous bodies, and lids (FIG. 1). These appear to be in the same technique as the bottles or in a contrasting color denoting a different material (fol. 261r).

The long-necked bottles are exclusively used for wine in the *Shahnama*, as several illustrations with youths pouring red liquid from them indicate (fols. 22v, 43v, 60v, 181v, 547r, 655r). Whether the shorter jugs held wine or water is unclear. In one illustration a man scoops water from a stream with two jugs of this shape (FIG. 2), implying that they were used for water despite their association with wine. On the other hand, examples at the beginning of a long sequence of such jugs, produced in Herat between 1461 and 1512 or later, bear verses alluding to wine drinking.[3] In the illustrations to Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, no one is depicted drinking from this type of jug, which begs the question of whether in the early sixteenth century they were used in connection with wine drinking but not as a vessel from which one imbibed or poured wine.[4] The only extant royal long-necked wine bottle that can be dated reliably to the early Safavid period is thought to have been taken by the Ottomans at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 or in its aftermath (FIG. 3). Slightly more than twenty inches high, it is made of zinc, partially gilded with applied gold ornament, and encrusted with turquoise, rubies, and emeralds. While no precise analogue for this bottle appears in the *Shahnama* illustrations, some bottles have what appear to be applied lobed medallions (FIG. 4; see also fol. 85v), and others contain inlay in a contrasting color (fol. 44v). As James Allan has noted, the early Safavids had a predilection for overlaying one precious metal on another, sometimes in combination with gems.[5] To the extent that it was possible on a small scale, the artists of the *Shahnama* reflected this taste in the bottles they depicted.

Although the long-necked gold wine bottle is the predominant form in Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, other types of bottles can also be found. These include blue-and-white ceramic bottles, either small and bulbous (fol. 7r), long-necked (fols. 26v, 602v), or flask-shaped (fol. 638r). From a painting one cannot determine whether these ceramics were Iranian or Chinese. However, several accounts by Europeans who visited the courts of Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasp mention porcelain vessels being used for both wine and water.[6] Given the superior hardness of Chinese porcelain and evidence in the Ardabil Shrine and Topkapı Palace of its acquisition by Safavid shahs,[7] the likelihood is that the *Shahnama* artists intended these ceramics to be seen as Chinese. Although the blue-and-white flask in folio 638r (FIG. 5) does not correspond exactly to any one Chinese prototype, it is close in form to an example from the early fifteenth century (FIG. 6). Its placement on a tray with a gold wine bottle and a gem-studded gold jug, set before Nushirvan, indicates its acceptability at the highest social level, that of the king.

Several large flasks in gold and in silver now tarnished to black appear in a number of paintings that also feature

Fig. 7. Detail of folio 223r: *Kay Khusrau Celebrates His Accession*

Fig. 8. Frontispiece (detail) of the *Bustan* of Sa'di (Persian, 1213/19–1292). Painted by Bihzad (Persian, ca. 1450–1535/36). Afghanistan, Herat, ca. 1488–89. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 12 x 8½ in. (30.5 x 21.6 cm). Egyptian National Library, Cairo (Adab Farsi 908, fol. 1)

long-necked wine bottles. The round, bulbous shape of these vessels (FIG. 7) recalls that of the blue-and-white ceramic flask, but their large dimensions suggest that they were intermediate containers between the great earthenware jars used for bulk storage and the elegant long-necked bottles with which kings and their guests were served. Both from their casual positioning (fol. 44v) and their placement at some distance from the wine bottles (fol. 223r), it is clear that these flasks occupy a less privileged place in the hierarchy of Safavid wine vessels. In the absence of extant examples, one must turn to painting to understand their use. The famous frontispiece of the *Bustan* of Sa'di, painted by Bihzad in 1488–89, contains a detail of a servant pouring wine from such a flask through a cup-shaped strainer into a long-necked bottle (FIG. 8).[8] Although the style of the flask and wine bottles had evolved by the 1520s, their function appears to have remained the same as in the late Timurid period. A smaller silver vessel with handles appears in two illustrations toward the end of the manuscript (FIG. 9; see also fol. 698v). In both paintings the two-handled ewer with an ovoid body, narrow neck with a knop, and domed top sits on a tray together with a long-necked wine bottle and a one-handled jug with a cover. The incised decoration is barely visible through the tarnishing of the silver surface. While this type of container does not appear in use in the *Shahnama*, it is certainly associated with the serving of wine and may also have held water or another liquid such as spirit of cinnamon, an alcoholic drink mentioned by Membré as having been served at a feast given by Shah Tahmasp's brother in 1540.[9]

Numerous examples in the *Shahnama* indicate that the preferred receptacle for drinking wine was a shallow bowl with a low foot, usually of gold but occasionally of silver or ceramic.[10] Held between the thumb and forefinger, the bowl is sometimes shown full of red wine (FIG. 10). Jewels adorn some cups in the illustrations, but the figures who drink from them are not only kings and princes but also courtiers and other guests at royal and aristocratic gatherings. Fortunately, two remarkable examples of early Safavid wine cups reveal the actual level of opulence of such pieces. Both are silver and one is decorated on its exterior with an arabesque design in gold

Fig. 9. Detail of folio 655v: *Nushirvan Responds to Questions of the Grand Magus*

Fig. 10. Detail of folio 79v: *Sam Is Visited by Prince Nauzar*

Fig. 11. Wine cup. Iran, 1500–1510. Silver inlaid with gold and niello, height 1¼ in. (3.2 cm), diam. 4⅜ in. (11.2 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Purchase (F1954.115)

inlay and niello (FIG. 11). Inscribed around its rim in gold inlay are verses from a ghazal by the poet Hafiz that allude to wine drinking. The exterior of the other bowl is covered with a layer of zinc over which openwork gold medallions, cartouches, and trees have been applied and turquoise has been inset. The lobed medallions contain pairs of figures, including a man in a Safavid turban holding the hand of a young woman with his right hand and what may be a wine bowl with his left (FIG. 12). Although the interior of the bowl has four gold medallions set with turquoise and rubies and a central roundel with the same treatment, these are more crudely executed than the decoration on the exterior and are thought to be later Ottoman additions.[11] The vignette of the man and woman holding hands is echoed in the *Shahnama* illustration of the marriage of Siyavush and Jarira (FIG. 13). Although the figures in the painting are seated whereas on the wine bowl they are standing, the association of the hand holding, the man drinking wine, and the heads tilted toward one another links the pair on the bowl with the scene in the painting. This is not to suggest that the bowl depicts the marriage of Siyavush and Jarira, but it may have been designed expressly as a wedding cup, perhaps for Shah Isma'il himself. He was encamped with his courtiers and army as well as his favorite wife at the disastrous Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, when it is assumed this wine bowl fell into the hands of the Ottomans.

Fig. 12. Detail of a wine bowl showing a man and woman holding hands. Iran, early 16th century. Silver, zinc, and gold filigree plaques, inlaid with turquoise, emeralds, and rubies, height 1¾ in. (4.4 cm), diam. 5¾ in. (14.5 cm). Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul (2/2869)

Fig. 13. Detail of folio 183v: *Siyavush and Jarira Wedded*

Fig. 14. Detail of folio 110v: *Rustam Finds Kay Qubad*

Elegant ewers with long necks, curved spouts and handles, pear-shaped bodies, and domed covers, called *aftaba*, often set inside a wide basin, appear in illustrations in which food is being served. Most of these vessels are gold, but silver and ceramic examples also appear.[12] The metal ewers are decorated with spiral fluting (fol. 46v) or lobes on all or part of the body (FIG. 14). Unfortunately, no extant example of this type of ewer exists. However, a mid-sixteenth-century Safavid copper-alloy wine bottle in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, was modified, most likely in Ottoman Turkey, to serve as a handled ewer (FIG. 15).[13] The grooves on its neck recall the fluting on ewers in the *Shahnama* but reveal the limits of the two-dimensional painted medium in differentiating between details in relief and those cut into the surfaces of objects. As is evident from a vignette in folio 339r in which a servant pours water from a ewer of this type to rinse the hands of one of the Iranians (FIG. 16), these vessels were intended to contain water and were used for washing. The basins in which they often are placed would have caught the

Fig. 15. Ewer. Iran, mid 16th century. Copper alloy; hammered, incised, and inlaid with black compound (mostly lost), height 17⅜ in. (44 cm), diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (482 1894)

Fig. 16. Detail of folio 339r: *Planning for the Joust of the Twelve Rooks*

water, avoiding dousing carpets or other furnishings. While the basins in the illustrations have a wide, low foot and walls that do not curve inward, the related examples of metalwork are without a foot. One basin with almost straight sides is dated 1510–11 (FIG. 17) and has been identified as a wine basin because it bears inscriptions referring to wine related to mystical and celestial symbolism.[11] However, its shape, except for the absence of a foot, recalls that of the basins accompanying ewers for washing hands. On another bowl, dated 1535-36 (FIG. 18), the inscriptions include the names of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones, the Shi'i hierarchy. This may reflect the change of emphasis from wine-bibbing Sunni Khurasan, where the earlier basin is thought to have been made, to Shah Tahmasp's orthodox Shi'i Tabriz, but it also indicates how such basins could be used for a variety of purposes depending on the historical and social context.

As with the ewers, most of the platters in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* are gold. Varying from large to small, the platters have low walls and a wide, low foot. A domed cover fits into some of them, but usually they are open and contain a range of foodstuffs, such as bread or stew (fol. 31v), pomegranates (fol. 45v) or other fruits, or sugar cones (FIG. 19). Some have feet extending from the base and terminating in leaf forms (fol. 236r). Few, if any, early Safavid examples of this type are published, but the profile of a smaller Timurid dish, dated 1496–97, anticipates those in the *Shahnama* (FIG. 20). Moreover, the several blue-and-white ceramic salvers in this manuscript conform to the same shape (see, for instance, fol. 300v). While one can assume that the Safavid shahs collected and used Chinese porcelains, metal platters and dishes are far more numerous and put to a broader range of uses in the *Shahnama* than their ceramic counterparts. In fact, the gold and silver platters serve as trays on which wine bottles, water jugs, cups, incense burners, and candlesticks stand. Folios 50v and 171v include platters containing gems and gold coins (FIG. 21). Finally, Guruy, the assassin of Siyavush, holds the head of his victim over a platter to catch his blood when he slits his throat (fol. 198r). Does the dearth

Fig. 17. Wine bowl with arabesque ornament and verses in *nasta'liq* script. Iran, 1510–11. Bronze; engraved, max. height ⅞ in. (2.2 cm), diam. 7½ in. (18.0 cm). Designed by Sultan Muhammad, signed by the master 'Ali Mahmud. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1191-1854)

Fig. 18. Al Imami Sayyid Naqqash al Husaini (Iranian, active first half of the 16th century). Inscribed bowl. Iran, probably Tabriz, 1535–36. Copper; tinned, engraved, and inlaid with black compound, height 6⅝ in. (16.7 cm), diam. 13¾ in. (34.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.615)

of such platters in modern collections indicate that far fewer examples existed in the reign of Shah Tahmasp than the illustrations of the *Shahnama* would lead us to believe? If these platters were the standard serving-dish-cum-tray of the first half of the sixteenth century, why have none survived? For now, these questions remain unanswered in a specific sense, but in general, if we accept that such platters were in broad use, we must also acknowledge that much of the tableware of the early Safavids, particularly what could be melted down, has been lost.

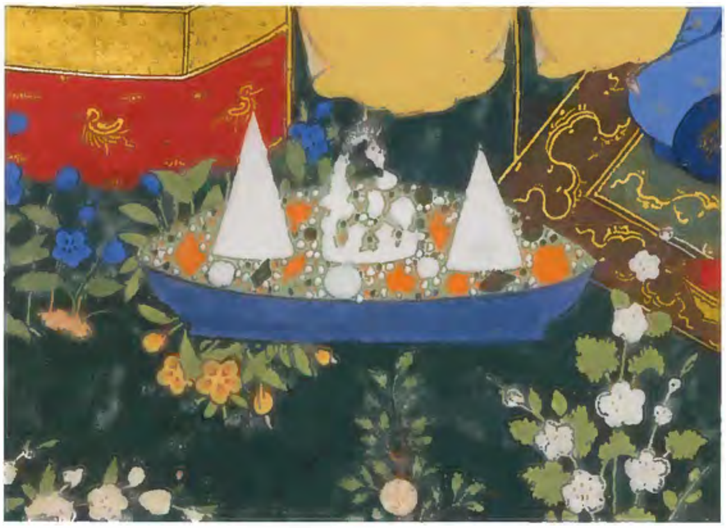


Fig. 19. Detail of folio 110v: *Rustam Finds Kay Qubad*

Fig. 20. Dish. Iran, 1496–97. Copper; cast and tinned with incised decoration and inlaid with black compound, height ¾ in. (1.8 cm), diam. 7½ in. (18.9 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (374-1897)

Fig. 21. Detail of folio 171v: *Siyavush Receives Gifts from Afrasiyab's Peace Envoy*

Incense Burners

The first incense burner to appear in Tahmasp's *Shahnama* is the one balanced on a tray by an angel depicted in the spandrel of an arch in folio 26v (FIG. 22). While the appearance of angels on the walls of Zahhak's palace may refer obliquely to Iblis, the fallen angel who kissed Zahhak's shoulders and caused snakes to spring from them, the association of angels and incense has paradisiacal connotations in Islamic art. Safavid illustrations of the Mi'raj, the Night Journey to the heavens of Muhammad on his human-headed horse, Buraq, include an angel with an incense burner set on a tray, positioned below the Prophet so that the aroma wafts upward in his direction.[15] Apart from the heavenly incense burner, most other examples in the *Shahnama* appear in the context of domestic settings, from scenes of marriages or intimacy to meetings of kings, princes, and other grandees, where they have several distinct functions. Additionally, incense was used to revive people, such as Zahhak when he fainted (fol. 29v) or mothers who have just given birth (FIG. 23). At times, for instance in *Mihrab Vents His Anger upon Sindukht* (fol. 83v), two incense burners are placed before a man and woman who are meeting, implying that two different types of incense were used with the intention of mingling their scents.

With one possible exception (fol. 164v), the twenty-six incense burners in the *Shahnama*, which vary somewhat in shape from tall and narrow to more squat, are lidded cylinders on feet and are carried or rest on the floor on trays.[16] At the apex of their domed tops, some are decorated with a figure of a bird while others have a simple knob. In contrast to medieval Iranian and Arab incense burners, which also have a cylindrical shape and a hinged dome,[17] they sit on three or more legs that extend dramatically out from the body and curve in at the foot. Absent from the burners in the paintings, however, are handles, which are known in many pre-Safavid examples. The closest extant parallels to the Safavid incense burners are Ottoman (FIG. 24) and suggest that, at some point in the late fifteenth century, a new variant developed in Iran. In addition to losing the handle attached to the bowl, the legs ceased to be modeled on animal forms and became thinner with an exaggerated S-curve shape and leaf-shaped feet. Each of the incense burners in the *Shahnama* is carried on a metal plate, which is also found in the Ottoman examples. The reason for the absence of Safavid incense burners from modern collections is not fully understood. Possibly they have been misidentified or they survive in fragmentary form, not conducive to exhibition in museums or attention in the marketplace. The Ottoman examples that share with the incense burners in the *Shahnama* paintings the same leg shape and associated plate suggest that an influence exists that awaits verification with Safavid prototypes.

Fig. 22. Detail of folio 26v: *The Snakes of King Zahhak*

Fig. 23. Detail of folio 61v: *The Birth of Zal*

Fig. 24. Incense burner (*buhurdan*). Turkey, second half of the 17th century. Gilt copper, height 9¼ in. (23.5 cm). Private collection

Fig. 25. Detail of folio 28v: *The Nightmare of Zahhak*

Fig. 26. Detail of folio 183v: *Siyavush and Jarira Wedded*

Illumination: Torches, Candlesticks, and Lamps

A number of stories in the *Shahnama* take place at night, a phenomenon indicated in the illustrations by the inclusion of various forms of torch, candlestick, and lamp. In the outdoors, both in battle scenes and at peaceful gatherings in the countryside, appear torches consisting of a wooden pole surmounted by a metal cage containing flaming coals.[18] In the foreground of folio 28v, *The Nightmare of Zahhak*, servants hold torches next to baskets of loaf-shaped rags resembling coals (FIG. 25). Membré described the latter as follows:

> [An] *ishik* . . . is a stout pole of wood, three fingers thick and half a rod long; and on the top of the said pole is a round iron plate, one palm across, and around the said iron there is a fine iron grid, half a palm high, and on top an iron ring, within which they put rags of old cloth, soaked in a certain oil which they call *naft*, which is found in a well in Shirvan. And they light the rags of the said cloth with fire and it burns fiercely and lasts three or four hours, making a fierce blaze.[19]

While the fuel for the torches in the *Shahnama* resembles charred wood, the oil of naphtha (*naft*) is bituminous and would blacken rags soaked in it, so most likely such rags were intended by the artist. In folio 183v, *Siyavush and Jarira Wedded*, an attendant pours from a silver ewer what must be assumed to be oil into the cage of the torch (FIG. 26). The text deals only with the marriage of Siyavush and Jarira, and the music-making and imbibing figures in the painting give no indication that the attendant is attempting to douse the flames with water, so the ewer must contain oil. Not only does this indicate that, in addition to rags, oil was employed to keep the flames alive, but it also illustrates another use of the type of ewer most often assumed to be holding water. Probably because torches were utilitarian objects, extant examples are not published and are apparently not in private or public collections of Safavid metalwork, though some fragments of cut-steel flat panels may come from such torches.

Candlesticks appear in seven of the manuscript's illustrations, invariably holding extremely long tapered candles.[20] Generally in the form of a truncated cone, the candlesticks vary somewhat in profile, in the shape of their necks and sockets, and in their materials. No precisely analogous pieces are extant, but a number of fifteenth-century and a few sixteenth-century examples share features with the painted versions in the *Shahnama*. Some candlesticks, such as the ones in folio 185v (FIG. 27), are possibly fanciful, since none with a domical base from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, produced either in Iran or Turkey, is attested. Necks with bosses and cup-shaped holders, however, are found in fifteenth-century Timurid and Turkmen oil lamps as well as in sixteenth-century Ottoman candlesticks. An oil lamp from the 1470s commissioned by the Aq Quyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan is such a type

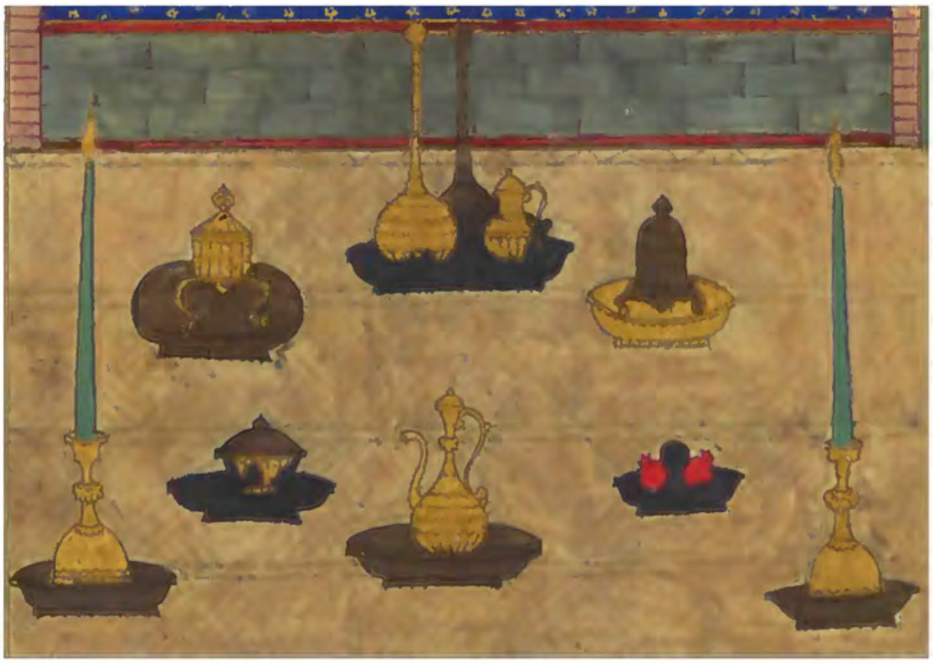


Fig. 27. Detail of folio 185v: *Siyavush and Farangis Wedded*

Fig. 28. Oil lamp. Western Iran or eastern Turkey, 1470s. Brass inlaid with silver, height 39¾ in. (101 cm). Commissioned by Uzun Hasan. The David Collection, Copenhagen (45/1999)

(FIG. 28), but the length of the neck and the straight sides of the base differ from those of the candlestick in folio 185v.

Closer parallels between the other candlesticks in the *Shahnama* and extant examples exist, except that the latter have openwork bases (FIG. 29),[21] while the ones in the illustrations are solid. The illustrated candlesticks themselves vary, from those with incised decoration and a boss on the neck (FIG. 30) to one with a brass or gold-and-silver base and a bulb at the base of the neck (fol. 516v) to another with jewels encrusted in the base and neck (fol. 731r). Since the neck components of candlesticks and lampstands were produced as separate parts that were either soldered together or screwed into each other and the base, they apparently often became disconnected. This might explain the range of profiles

Fig. 29. Openwork candlestick inscribed with wishes for its owner's good fortune, peace, and happiness. Iran, ca. 1500. Brass; cast, pierced, engraved, and inlaid with black organic compound, height 9⅞ in. (25.1 cm), diam. of base 8 in. (20.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, The Seley Foundation Inc. Gift, Louis E. and Theresa S. Seley Purchase Fund for Islamic Art, Schimmel Foundation Inc., Margaret Mushekian and Mr. and Mrs. Jerome A. Straka Gifts, Rogers and The Friends of the Islamic Department Funds, 1980 (1980.114)

Fig. 30. Detail of folio 266v: *Rustam Expounds on Fate and Death*

Fig. 31. Detail of folio 731r: *Barbad the Concealed Musician*

in the manuscript, reflecting the reuse of bases and the addition of new necks and sockets. To a somewhat lesser extent than the incense burners, very few early sixteenth-century examples of this type of candlestick remain, begging the question of whether they were melted down in midcentury or later to produce the pillar candlesticks that came into vogue after 1539.[22]

Finally, *Barbad the Concealed Musician* (fol. 731r), one of the most elaborate nocturnal compositions in the manuscript, contains a large lantern in the form of a cylindrical drum surmounted by a dome (FIG. 31). Inside it a green candle stands seemingly by itself, without a base or socket. The lantern consists of ribs, probably made of metal, that rise to a pointed dome. About one-third up the sides are lozenges that might have enabled the lantern to be folded accordion-style, and at the base of the dome is a solid silver-color band ringing the lantern. Light brown paper or skin is stretched between the ribs. Such a lantern would have been both portable and disposable, an example of the ephemeral type of object that is known only from an illustration such as this.

Fountainheads

Many, but not all, illustrations set in and around garden pavilions include small pools edged in stone and in some instances fed by a narrow canal. The shape of the pools varies, with octagons and lobed circles being the most numerous.[23] Each of these pools contains a fountainhead whose gold hue contrasts with the once-silver, now-black color of the water. With two exceptions (fols. 602v, 649r) all the fountainheads consist of a vertical pipe with one or more bosses and a pair of dragons' heads along its shaft, from either side of which spills water. The fountainhead in folio 602v comprises a pipe that passes through one boss and terminates in a large bulb with three spouts. Both the bulb and the boss are studded with pearls. While the fountainhead in folio 649r has no jewels, it appears to be a simplified version of the dragon's-head variety, retaining the two curved spouts without the dragons' heads. Water flows from the top of the pipe as well as from the side spouts. The fact that the two variant fountainheads appear toward the end of the *Shahnama* may reflect the introduction of new types of fountains in the mid-1530s, though fountains with dragons' heads continue to appear in Safavid painting

Fig. 32. Fountainhead. India, Deccan, or Iran, late 16th–early 17th century. Brass, height 8¼ in. (21 cm). Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.142)

Fig. 33. Detail of folio 242r, *Kay Khusrau Orders Tus Recalled*

Figs. 34, 35. Fountainhead and spout. Iran, probably 18th century. Copper alloy and steel; upper part engraved, silvered, and gilded, 4¾ x 1¼ x ⅝ in. (12.1 x 3.2 x 1.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.594)

in the second half of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, sixteenth-century fountainheads of either type are extremely rare, if not nonexistent, but a brass fountain spout that has been assigned to the Deccan or Iran (FIG. 32) resembles the one illustrated in folio 242r (FIG. 33) in the way that the spouts attach to a large boss below another faceted, round boss and a faceted socket on the shaft of the fountain spout. However, unlike the example in the painting, the bosses and socket are close together, not separated by lengths of pipe. As with many of the objects depicted in the *Shahnama*, artistic license and the absence of precisely analogous objects enable a broad typology to be established, but the details remain unclear. A fragmentary eighteenth-century fountainhead and spout terminating in a stylized dragon's head (FIGS. 34, 35) give some idea of how the originals would have been constructed. The fountainhead consists of a pipe with three units: the bowl, a flaring neck, and an ogival bulb. Each of these elements combines openwork steel bands with sections of damascened copper alloy. The spout is less dramatically curved and the dragon's head less well defined than those in the *Shahnama*, but this fountain spout is certainly the descendant of the sixteenth-century versions.

Musical Instruments

A perusal of the illustrations in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* gives the impression that music played a significant role in social gatherings, while horns and drums accompanied armies in battle. In a sense, musical instruments bridge the gap between *bazm*, feasting, and *razm*, fighting. Because traditional music has flourished in Iran into modern times, instruments of the types found in the *Shahnama* have continued to be produced and provide close parallels to their sixteenth-century counterparts.[24] The group of five musicians in folio 35r, *The Feast of Faridun and Kundrau*, plays some of the most commonly found instruments in the manuscript (FIG. 36). Kneeling in a row in the left foreground of the painting, the musicians hold, from the left, a reed flute, called a *ney*; a stringed *setar*; a tambourine, or *daf*; a zither, or *qanun;* and a harp, or *chang*.

Fig. 36. Detail of folio 35r: *The Feast of Faridun and Kundrau*

The *ney* in the painting appears to be about thirty inches long and overlaps the marginal ruling of the page; its modern counterparts range from twelve to thirty inches in length and have six knots and six holes.[25] The player holds it to the corner of his lips and at an oblique angle. His fingers cover the holes whose number, five or six, cannot be determined. A late nineteenth-century *ney* with five holes and five segments (FIG. 38) is a short version of this instrument. As is evident in folio 60v, in which two men play the *ney*, musicians sometimes brought spare instruments, which they kept in fine enameled cases, an example of which is depicted in the painting lying diagonally on the carpet in front of them (FIG. 39).

Next to the *ney* player in folio 35r is a figure plucking the strings of a *setar*, an instrument in the lute family characterized by its small sound box and long neck (FIG. 37). The three tuning pegs of the example in the painting indicate that it has three (*se* in Persian) strings. Traditionally the *setar* player uses only the index finger of his right hand to play his instrument, and those produced today are very similar to, though in some instances smaller than, those found in Safavid paintings.

One of the most frequent accompaniments to the *ney* and *setar* is the *daf*, a large tambourine with small cymbals in its frame. In the group portrayed in folio 35r, the *daf* would have provided the percussion. The example in the painting would

Fig. 37. Sitar (*setar*). Iran, 19th century. Wood, bone, and wire, length 29 in. (73.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.327)

Fig. 38. Flute (*ney*). Iran, late 19th century. Bamboo, brass mounts, and rawhide bindings, length 17½ in. (44.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.2452)

Fig. 39. Detail of folio 60v: *Manuchihr Enthroned*

Fig. 40. Detail of folio 550v: *Bahram Gur Takes His Harpist Hunting*

measure about sixteen inches in diameter, whereas modern versions and even those in Persian paintings of the seventeenth century are up to double this size.[26] Possibly the artist was more concerned with achieving a balanced composition than rendering the *daf* precisely down to the last inch, or the instrument grew larger over time or varied in size in different regions of Iran. The next musician in the row plays the *qanun*, a stringed instrument in the dulcimer family. The shape is similar or identical to that of the *santur*, practitioners of which use small hammers to strike the strings. The musician in the illustration, however, plucks with his fingers, which indicates that the instrument is a *qanun*.[27] Apparently, the *santur* came into use only in the mid-Safavid period, later than the reign of Shah Tahmasp (1524–76). As is evident in the illustration, *qanun*s are often decorated with inlaid wood and ivory (*khatamkari*).

Although the *chang*, or harp, ceased to be played after the Safavid period, it appears regularly in Safavid manuscript illustrations with either male or female harpists. Its form evolved from the arched harps of antiquity to the angular form depicted in the paintings. The harp consisted of a curved box and a horizontal bar between which strings of silk or gut ran diagonally and were attached with pegs, seen in folio 35r along the bottom of the bar. The box is often decorated with inlaid wood or ivory or other embellishments such as the two black and two red tassels attached to the box of the harp in the illustration. In Persian art the harp is an integral element of the iconography of the story of Bahram Gur and the slave girl Azada, who played the harp while riding a camel (FIG. 40), but its appearance in musical ensembles confirms its relevance in early Safavid society. As scholars have suggested, it was a prestigious instrument associated with courtly revelry but never seen in gatherings of Sufis or tribal people.[28]

Fig. 41. Detail of folio 110v: *Rustam Finds Kay Qubad*

Fig. 42. Detail of folio 185v: *Siyavush and Farangis Wedded*

Another instrument associated with courtly gatherings is the *oud*, or lute. Two variants of the *oud* appear in the *Shahnama*: one in which the box and the neck seemingly are made of one piece of wood (FIG. 41), and another, more common one in which the neck is fashioned separately and glued to the box (FIG. 42).[29] Although an ancient type of Iranian lute, the *barbat*, was constructed of a single piece of wood, one cannot be certain that the differences between the *ouds* represented in the *Shahnama* indicate the artists' familiarity with the variants of this instrument. The long neck of the lute in folio 84v is a characteristic of the *barbat*, but the artist may have lengthened the neck to solve the compositional problem of showing both ends of the lute, because the rest of it was obscured by the figure holding it (FIG. 43). In this illustration a musician holding a *daf* in his left hand and castanets in his right accompanies the *barbat/oud* player. In the *Shahnama* the famous lutenist Barbad hid in a tree in the garden of Shah Khusrau Parviz and played melodies identified by Firdausi as "The Lord Justice Addressed," "The Battle of the Brave," and "Green on Green." Apparently these melodies were already old in the time of Firdausi. His mention of specific tunes suggests that he assumed his eleventh-century readers would recognize exactly what he meant, but that knowledge would have been lost by the time of Shah Tahmasp.

Fig. 43. Detail of folio 84v: *Sindukht Comes to Sam Bearing Gifts*

Fig. 44. Detail of folio 513v: *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud*

Fig. 45. Detail of folio 102v: *Qaran Slays Barman*

Fig. 46. Detail of folio 100r: *Barman Slays Old Qubad*

The only instrument in the fiddle family that appears in the *Shahnama* is the *kamancha* (FIG. 44). It consists of a small spherical box, a long neck with three pegs, and a spike. The strings were reportedly metal, while the bow, held at a ninety-degree angle to the neck, was strung with horsehair. While the *kamancha* accompanies the *ney* in the *Shahnama* illustration, it is often rendered with a square sound box and played in combination with the *daf*, the *chang*, and the *barbat*.

The battles of the *Shahnama* have a marked aural aspect, represented in the illustrations not only by the clash of swords and the percussion of spears striking armor but also by the blare of horns and the boom of kettledrums produced by the *naqqarakhana*, or military band. Two types of long brass horns appear in the *Shahnama*: a straight battle horn called a *karna*, with a mouthpiece, bosses at the joints of its sections, and a conical opening at the end; and a horn with a bent shaft. Some versions of the second type have an S-curve halfway down the shaft (FIG. 45), and some have a semicircular bend close to the conical end of the horn (FIG. 46). While a nineteenth-century *karna* measuring more than sixty inches long (FIG. 47) provides an impression of those found in the *Shahnama*, the bent horn may have no surviving analogues. Short horns called *sorna*, on the contrary, appear in numerous battle scenes as well as in extant examples (FIG. 48). One such

Fig. 47. Long horn (*karna*). Iran, late 19th century. Brass, length 60⅜ in. (153.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.2448)

Fig. 48. Short double-reed oboe (*sorna*). Iran, late 19th century. Wood, brass, bone, horn, and reed, length 11 in. (27.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.2210)

Fig. 49. Detail of folio 42v: *Faridun Tests His Sons*

Fig. 50. Hawking drum. Iran, ca. 1600. Brass; cast and engraved with champlevé enamel and black compound, height 5½ in. (14 cm), diam. of rim 8½ in. (21.5 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1060-1869)

Fig. 51. Detail of folio 190v: *The Prowess of Siyavush Vexes Garsivaz*

horn rendered in brown appears to be made of wood (fol. 232v). It is a double-reed instrument with a pirouette mouthpiece and finger holes that are not visible in the painting.[30] In some illustrations the short horn is painted gold, which is not necessarily an accurate rendering and may instead be an example of artistic choice.

Several types of drums and drumsticks also appear in Tahmasp's *Shahnama*. These include giant kettledrums (*kus* or *naqqara*), invariably placed on either side of a dromedary's hump. Most often their drummer, who sits behind them on the camel, holds two sticks terminating in round heads probably covered in leather, similar to those used today for gongs or large drums. For smaller pairs of drums (*duhul*), the drummers use sticks that taper to a point and are most likely made of wood (fol. 54v). This small type resembles the hawking drums mounted in front of the saddle above the rider's knee found in several illustrations.[31] The hawking drum of Faridun's son Salm is white with dark blue medallions on its sides, which suggests that it was made of painted wood (FIG. 49). Other examples (fols. 110v, 182v) have green or red surfaces, indicating that the leather stretched across the frame was tinted, while yet others appear metallic (fols. 81v, 190v), which corresponds to extant, albeit later, Safavid examples (FIG. 50). These drums were used to call the hunting bird back to its owner when it was working. Interestingly, at polo matches or other competitions depicted in the *Shahnama*, battle drums both large and small are played with drumsticks (FIG. 51), whereas the hawking drums are never depicted with sticks. Thus, the war drums functioned not only to frighten the enemy or its horses but also to enhance the excitement of contests, which were essentially metaphors for battle. The appearance of the *naqqarakhana* at such events also reflects the expansion of its role in the Safavid period to encompass performances at royal celebrations.

Fig. 52. Detail of folio 658v: *The Great Sage Questions Hurmuzd before Nushirvan*

Fig. 53. Detail of folio 261r: *Piran Meets the Khaqan of Chin*

Thrones, Seats, and Tables

The *Shahnama* includes many scenes in which the shahs or other rulers are enthroned, while their subjects and visitors are seated either on carpets or various kinds of stools and chairs. The preferred posture of those not seated on a throne, chair, or stool is either cross-legged or kneeling with one's legs tucked tightly under the thighs (fol. 66v). All the rulers depicted on thrones in the manuscript sit cross-legged or with one leg bent and out to the side and the other bent and hanging over the edge of the throne. In only one image does this posture deviate from the norm, *The Great Sage Questions Hurmuzd before Nushirvan,* in which Nushirvan holds his bent knee close to his chest, and the other, unseen leg is bent under his robes (FIG. 52). In some instances rulers are depicted sitting on large thrones with other figures who invariably kneel on one or both knees (FIG. 53; see also fols. 36v, 183v), unless they are royal as well (fol. 218r).

The thrones in the *Shahnama* range from small to large, ornate to simple, and include ones that seem to be specifically for indoor or outdoor use. Most often the thrones are hexagonal with low walls on each side, an opening in the front, and two to four stairs to the floor (FIG. 54). In some illustrations the ruler sits in a pavilion on top of the hexagonal base, which in turn has feet, often covered by low curtains. In many examples the figure is seated in front of a gilded back panel with a

Fig. 54. Detail of folio 308v: *Kay Khusrau Fetes Rustam beneath the Jewel Tree*

Fig. 55. Detail of folio 24v: *The Court of Jamshid*

Fig. 56. Throne. Iran, 17th century. Gold, rubies, tourmalines, turquoise, pearls, silk, and wood, 35⅜ x 24⅝ x 20¼ in. (90 x 62.5 x 51.5 cm). Kremlin Museums, The Armory Chamber, Moscow (6 28)

lavish arch or baldachin above it (fols. 44v, 86v). Simpler thrones, placed on a platform, have high walls or screens that appear to be covered with fabric (FIG. 55). The most minimal thrones are rectangular or hexagonal and resemble a box with low walls and legs. Since the three examples of this type appear at the end of the manuscript (fols. 308v, 551v, 658v), they may reflect a change in style of actual Safavid thrones or the simpler, less ornate mode practiced by some of the manuscript's artists.[32] Whether placed indoors or outdoors, the thrones in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* give the impression of being comprised of modules that could be dismantled and moved with relative ease. This suggestion is supported by the description of Shah Tahmasp's camp with its buildings and furnishings in triplicate so that his men could reproduce the same arrangement at each stage of his travels.[33] While the extensive use of gold for thrones in the manuscript might be considered fanciful, one of the few extant Safavid thrones, albeit from the early seventeenth century, is gold with inlaid precious and semiprecious stones (FIG. 56).

Chairs and stools include simple hexagonal or rectangular platforms without walls and folding stools that are also used as tables. Although the backs of the chairs are usually hidden by the people sitting on them, one illustration includes two empty gold chairs with low backs and no arms (fol. 96v). This corresponds to the low back of the later throne in the Kremlin armory. However, other chairs (FIG. 57; see also fol. 276v)

Fig. 57. Detail of folio 242r: *Kay Khusraw Orders Tus Recalled*

also include the slanted sides found on the Kremlin example, which begs the question of whether, despite its expensive materials, the Kremlin throne is not actually a chair. A number of chairs have low sides that are solid panels with geometric inlaid wood or painted or metal inlay arabesque decoration (fols. 87v, 170v, 171v, 174r). In group compositions that include an enthroned figure, the personages seated on chairs usually rank highest among the audience. Moreover, the

Fig. 58. Detail of folio 555v: *Bahram Gur Negotiates for the Throne*

hierarchy is reflected in the ornament of the chairs, with the most important figures sitting on the most ornate chairs. For example, in the illustration of Siyavush receiving gifts from the envoy of Afrasiyab (fol. 171v), Rustam's chair at the left is both larger and more elaborately decorated than that of the envoy at the right.

In three paintings (fols. 218r, 413r, 555v), figures sit on what appear to be folding stools. The legs cross to form an X, and the seat, most likely made of leather, stretches between two poles extending several inches beyond the sitter to the right and left (FIG. 58). This type of stool is akin to the European campstool except that it is simpler in form and has no back. Illustrations in the fourteenth-century *Jami' al-Tavarikh* also include folding stools, but the figures sit on what appear to be canework seats, sometimes covered with a cushion.[34] The inclusion of folding stools in the *Zafarnama* of 1467–68 demonstrates the continued use of this item in the fifteenth century.[35] In Tahmasp's *Shahnama* the folding campstool is also used as a table. Four paintings (fols. 10r, 48v, 49v, 413r) depict shields, swords, and arrow cases resting on a stool (FIG. 59). In one instance the crown of the murdered Iraj also

Fig. 59. Detail of folio 10r: *Firdausi Proves His Literary Talents at the Court of Sultan Mahmud*

Fig. 60. Detail of folio 64v: *Sam Returns with Zal*

Fig. 61. Detail of folio 226v: *Kay Khusrau Launches the War upon Turan*

lies on a stool (fol. 49v). Since other types of objects such as bottles and jugs are placed on rectangular or square metal tables with legs (fols. 27v, 654r), campstools must have had a specifically military association in the early Safavid period.

One other type of seating bears mention: the howdah. Designed to be carried by elephants, howdahs appear in several illustrations in the *Shahnama*, invariably in the midst of an army and often in battle (FIGS. 60, 61). Two types of howdahs are found in the manuscript: one with panels around the sides but no "roof" (fols. 55v, 59v, 64v, 112v, 226v) and its variant, with side panels and a high back panel (fols. 98v, 243v, 271r, 274v, 376v, 643v); and one with a baldachin or other form of roof (fol. 59v). Like the thrones, these howdahs appear to be modular with frames that can be fitted with panels. Although Iranians had used elephants in battle in pre-Islamic times, they were not a feature of warfare in the Safavid period. Safavid artists might have had some familiarity with howdahs, since they were in use in India for a range of activities, from being ridden in processions to carrying generals on the battlefield. However, the more likely prototypes for the howdahs in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* were illustrations in Persian manuscripts of the fifteenth century. For example, *Rustam Dragging the Khaqan of Chin from His Elephant* in the *Shahnama* produced for the Timurid prince Baisunghur in 1429–30 depicts a gold howdah with side panels and no roof or high back panel.[36] Although its painted or lacquered decoration differs from that in the Safavid manuscript, its form is essentially the same as one type of howdah in the sixteenth-century rendering. Thus, when the illustrations of the *Shahnama* required the inclusion of objects with which the artists would not have had personal familiarity, they could turn to the manuscripts in the royal library for examples.

Tools and Implements

A few of the illustrations to the *Shahnama* contain renderings of specific tools and implements that lend an insight into the practical side of Safavid life. *The Court of Jamshid* portrays the shah enthroned overseeing the growth of the trades of metalworking, textile manufacturing, and other crafts during his reign (FIG. 62). At the lower right, outside the palace walls, two men operate a long saw with which they are splitting a large log. The log is held in place by being wedged into the crook of another log on which the men stand. On the ground nearby lie a small axe and what appears to be an adze that would have been used to trim the bark off the log. Owing to the heavy use to which tools are put, one would not expect to find extant specimens, and for this reason their representation in paintings is enlightening.[37]

An especially interesting section of this painting shows a weaver making white cloth on a horizontal loom. His right hand is on the shuttle and his left is on the beater, which he pulls toward himself. It seems that he has just finished passing

Fig. 62. Detail of folio 24v: *The Court of Jamshid*

زخارا بافسون برون آورید
شد آن بندها را سراسر کلید
دگر بویهای خوش آورد باز
که دارند مردم ببویش نیاز

چو بان و چو کافور و چون مشک ناب
چو عود و چو عنبر چو روشن گلاب
پزشکی و درمان هر دردمند
در تن درستی و راه گزند

همین رازها نیز کرد آشکار
جهان را نیامد چنو خواستار
گذر کرد از آن پس بکشتی بر آب
ز کشور بکشور چو آمد شتاب

چنین سال پنجه بورزید نیز
ندید از هنر بر خرد بسته چیز
همه کردنیها چو آمد پدید
بگیتی جز از خویشتن را ندید

چو آن کارها وی آمد بجای
ز جای مهی برتر آورد پای
بفر کیانی یکی تخت ساخت
چه مایه بدو گوهر اندر نشاخت

که چون خواستی دیو برداشتی
ز هامون بگردون برافراشتی
چو خورشید تابان میان هوا
نشسته برو شاه فرمان روا

جهان انجمن شد بر تخت اوی
شگفتی فرومانده از بخت اوی

سه سال نو آن شهریار گزین
برآسودش از رنج تن دل ز کین
بزرگان بشادی بیاراستند
می و جام و رامشگران خواستند

چنین جشن فرخ از آن روزگار
بماند از چنان خسروان یادگار
چنان سال سیصد همی رفت کار
ندیدند مرگ اندر آن روزگار

ز رنج و ز بدشان نبود آگهی
میان بسته دیوان بسان رهی
یکی تخت پیروزه کرد بپای
نشسته برو بر جهان کدخدای

Fig. 63. Detail of folio 521v: *The Story of Haftvad and the Worm*

Fig. 64. Detail of folio 24v: *The Court of Jamshid*

Fig. 65. Scissors. Turkey, 18th–19th century. Steel; damascened with gold, 10½ x 1¾ x ⅜ in. (26.8 x 4.3 x 0.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.906)

the weft through the shed and is in the process of beating the weft in place against the fell of the fabric. Above the weaver is a suspension system holding two harnesses and attached to lines that rise up to the ceiling. Loom weights on either side of the warp beam, located on the floor, maintain the warp tension during weaving. A similar mechanism secures the tension on the cloth beam, shown in front of the weaver. In the foreground are two wheel-driven skein holders, shown from two different vantage points. The one on the left is six-armed with a skein of yarn wound around it. The one on the right shows the process of plying two yarns together.[38] In *The Story of Haftvad and the Worm*, four young women spin thread on similar spinning wheels that have an extension on which they have either rested their feet or placed a rock to hold the tool steady (FIG. 63). As with the woodworking tools, Safavid looms and spindles survive only in pictorial form. However, in some parts of India, this type of spinning wheel was still in use in the twentieth century.

On the terrace in front of Jamshid's throne, metalworkers ply their trade. One holds an enormous bellows connected to a square, pillar-shaped furnace. Its glowing heat is visible through an arch on the edge of which rest two ingots. Nearby a workman holds a red-hot piece of metal over an anvil with two sets of tongs, while three other men prepare to pound it with their hammers. Meanwhile, in the left foreground an artisan works on a mortar with a hammer and chisel or similar tool. He has already produced a pear-shaped bottle and a small inkwell or other bulbous object, both of which stand next to a small tub that could be an annealing tank or a crucible. The metalworking tools found in this

Fig. 66. Inkwell and pen case (*davat-e daulat*) with arabesques and *nastaliq* inscriptions. Iran, early 16th century. Brass, length of pen case 11⅞ in. (30 cm). Signed by the craftsman Mirak Husein Yazdi. Benaki Museum, Athens (TE 13172)

Fig. 67. Detail of folio 513v: *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud*

Fig. 68. Detail of folio 105r: *Afrasiyab on the Iranian Throne*

painting appear in some Timurid images, but outside of archaeological contexts, which are usually earlier than the sixteenth century, such items do not survive. The depiction of people making everyday metal objects is equally rare.

The last craftsman in this painting kneels on the left of the carpet, cutting a textile with a very large pair of scissors (FIG. 64). Before him lies a framed rectangle that may be a cloth panel used on the side of a throne. While scissors are extant from eighteenth- and ninteenth-century Turkey, they are daintier than the shears the tailor wields (FIG. 65). Unlike the metalworkers and other artisans, the tailor wears a typical Safavid turban with a red taj, the cap with a tall, vertical projection favored by supporters of the shah. This and the figure's proximity to the king suggest that he enjoyed higher status than the other craftsmen in the picture.

The combination inkwell and pen case, or ***davat-e daulat***, which appears three times in the manuscript (fols. 31v, 105r, 513v), has been described as "one of the prominent insignia of royal power and ministerial office."[39] While medieval Iranian inkwells were decorated with vignettes such as enthronements, combats, or hunts, as well as poetry that reinforces the royal or ministerial role of the *davat-e daulat*, extant early Safavid examples, including one in the Benaki Museum, Athens, have no figural ornament (FIG. 66). Instead their surfaces are covered with inscriptions on a vine-scroll ground and with lobed roundels containing cloud bands.[40] The inscriptions refer to the "state inkwell" and "the enemy blackhearted as the inkwell,"[41] possibly alluding to the Aq Quyunlu Turkmens that Shah Isma'il had vanquished in 1501, which would bear out the suggestion that the Benaki

example was produced in connection with the accession of Shah Isma'il.[42] Each of the inkwell–pen cases illustrated in the *Shahnama* is of the same form as the one in the Benaki Museum, namely a cylindrical brass inkwell with a domical top. In *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud,* the domed top rises directly from the cylindrical base (FIG. 67), whereas on the extant examples it curves in to form a flat surface above the rim where the top joins the body of the inkwell. The Benaki pen case is soldered to the inkwell, and a chain attaches the end of one of the stoppers of the pen-case barrel to the inkwell. The inkwell–pen case in the illustration also has a double-barreled pen case, but no chain is visible.

The appearance of the inkwell–pen case in association with Firdausi's eulogy of Sultan Mahmud does not adhere strictly to the official status of this type of object, since Firdausi was a poet praising his patron, not a minister of state enacting laws and signing proclamations with the paraph, or monogram, of the ruler. *Afrasiyab on the Iranian Throne,* on the other hand, provides a graphic instance of how the *davat-e daulat* was used. As the Iranian loot that Afrasiyab has expropriated is brought before him, his secretary or chancellor (it is not specified in the text) makes an inventory of each bag as it is lifted from a decorated wood chest. Holding a long scroll in his left hand, the scribe dips his reed pen into his inkwell, visible in front of his waist sash (FIG. 68). The pen case has been tucked behind the sash, and the domical top is attached to the case, probably by a chain, and hangs below it. This detail not only provides an insight into how a Safavid court chancery would have functioned but also demonstrates that a number of the objects that appear in the *Shahnama* had close parallels in the world of the artists who were painting its illustrations.

Standards

No battle scene in the *Shahnama* is complete without the inclusion of standards, or *'alams*, raised high above the soldiers' heads or smashed to the ground in an army's defeat (fol. 241r). *'Alams* were also carried to signify the presence of grandees or royalty and appear in scenes of parleys and other official meetings. In one painting they extend above a palace roof as insignia of the local ruling family (fol. 143r). Although beginning in the seventeenth century they came to be used primarily in religious processions, there is no evidence of this practice in Tahmasp's *Shahnama*. The presence of *'alams* is attested in the period of Shah Tahmasp by Membré:

> In front go the banners, which they call *'alam*, which are lances covered with red broadcloth, with two points, and on the top of the lance a circle, and inside the said circle, certain letters of copper, cut out and gilded. . . . They are carried in the hand on horseback. . . . As many standards go as there are kingdoms.[43]

Fig. 69. Detail of folio 206v: *Human Diverts Rustam from Afrasiyab*

Fig. 70. Detail of folio 343r: *The Sixth "Joust of the Rooks": Bizhan versus Ruyin*

Fig. 71. Detail of folio 272v: *The Combat of Rustam and Chingish*

Fig. 72. Detail of folio 226v: *Kay Khusrau Launches the War upon Turan*

In scenes where the protagonists are accompanied by their soldiers but are not fighting, several standards with differently colored and decorated flags are present, perhaps representing the different tribes or families in each army. In 1526, two years after Shah Tahmasp came to the throne, two Qizilbash tribes went to battle against each other because of a dispute over an important position at court. The Ustajlu army routed its Takkalu enemy, which was fighting on behalf of the shah, but when two of the victors "caught sight of the gilded ball on top of the royal standard, at once they abandoned the fight, and wheeled their horses around."[44] Thus, the royal standard still exerted great symbolic power on the battlefield during exactly the period that Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* was being produced.

The *'alams* in the manuscript are extremely varied in form. The most common one consists of a pear-shaped disk with a pair of outward-facing dragons' heads on either side, with long "necks" connected to the standard below the disk.[45] Three pointed leaf forms spring from the tip. Below the disk on some *'alams* are one or more round bosses from which horsehair tails are suspended. Large colored flags, furled or unfurled, appear below the metal bosses, attached to the wooden pole. On some *'alams* of this type, the pear-shaped disk is carved with openwork decoration, while on one, a flaming aureole borders a void (FIG. 69). Lions' heads, sun faces, and inscriptions also occur in place of plain or decorated disks. Variants include standards with leaf forms (fol. 263r) or lions' heads (FIG. 70) instead of dragons; with single leaf finials and orbs (fol. 328r) instead of pear shapes; one with the word "Allah" at the tip of the pear-shaped disk (FIG. 71); and three with a dramatically curved pipe that terminates in the head of a dragon (fols. 271r, 466r) or a lion (FIG. 72). While the lions and dragons have royal connotations, in a painting such as *Rustam Slays Isfandiyar* (fol. 466r), the figure with the dragon standard appears on Rustam's side of the landscape, rather than on that of Prince Isfandiyar. Thus, it is unclear whether in the manuscript any strict protocol was followed in the assignment of *'alams* to one party or another.

Extant early Safavid *'alams* are rare but can be found in Iranian and Turkish collections as well as in museums and private collections in Europe and North America. They are often missing elements, as on the *'alam* in the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, in which rivet holes on the finial reveal that another piece originally was attached (FIG. 73).[46] Nonetheless, the appearance of two pairs of dragons on this *'alam* and the invocation to God, Muhammad, and 'Ali in the pear-shaped center would have supplied maximum protection to the people over whose heads it was carried. Early Safavid *'alams* strongly influenced those of the Deccan in India, where the paired dragons and pear-shaped centers continued to appear, while in Iran the development of the form corresponded to the increasing use of standards in religious contexts and to the growth of cut steel as a preferred medium of metalworkers.[47]

Fig. 73. Standard (*'alam*). Iran, 16th century. Pierced steel plate with molded iron adjuncts, 32⅛ x 12¾ in. (81.5 x 32.5 cm). Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00679)

Textiles and Costumes

Every illustration to the *Shahnama* includes textiles. From robes and turbans to carpets, tents, and awnings, the world of the Safavids owes much of its color to the wool, cotton, and silk goods that adorn its people, animals, and environment. Furthermore, turbans, hats, and crowns are as much keys to social status in the *Shahnama* as physical proximity to the king or other powerful figures. The *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp is a gold mine of information about Safavid costumes and textiles, worthy of a detailed study. This essay can only touch on some of the particularities of dress and furnishing fabrics found in the manuscript.

The most obvious hallmark of Safavid dress is the taj, the tall, columnar extension in twelve gores, or folds, that rises from the cap that men wore underneath their turbans. Often erroneously called a "baton," the taj instantly differentiated a Safavid man from a Turk, foreigner, or person whose headdress identified his occupation. A reference to a rare survival

Fig. 74. Detail of folio 212r: *Kay Khusrau Rides Bihzad for the First Time*

Fig. 75. Detail of folio 52v: *The Envoy Returns to Salm and Tur*

Fig. 76. Detail of folio 134r: *Kay Kavus Ascends to the Sky*

of this type of cap and its projection notes that it was made of silk over paper wadding,[48] but presumably other types of cloth were also used. Although this type of turban cap is supposed to have been invented by Shaikh Haidar, Shah Tahmasp's grandfather, Shah Isma'il devised the taj with the high, narrow extension, which was distinct from the lower, domical taj of Shaikh Haidar.[49] The Turkmen followers of Shah Isma'il were called Qizilbash, or "redheads," because of the red color of their taj, but strict adherence to this mode seems to have faded by the reign of Shah Tahmasp. Some workmen and servants, however, wear a turban cap, or ***kulah***, that might be associated with the old style, called Shaikh Haidari, and would indicate both their class and their old-fashioned appearance (fol. 44v). Most turban cloths in the manuscript are white, but cloths in a range of colors, both plain and ornamented, appear throughout the *Shahnama*. While kings and princes are often depicted wearing crowns, the highborn are also distinguished by extravagant plumes from ostriches or eagle owls and by feather brushes of different colors fixed to their helmets, crowns, and turbans (FIG. 74).

Other forms of headdress include a brimmed hat (fol. 40v), which may be based on Ilkhanid pictorial sources rather than on observation but indicates the foreignness of a figure at the Yemeni court of King Sarv. Certain jobs required special headgear such as the domed cap with a plume worn by the footman who precedes the envoy of Salm and Tur in folio 52v (FIG. 75). According to Membré, these figures were called ***shatirs***, and in addition to their plumed caps, they wore bells fastened to their belts and short skirts over trousers.[50] Some other hats, such as the Persian lamb cap with a contrasting fur brim (fol. 67v) or the cap with an upturned brim resembling those worn today in Kyrgyzstan (fol. 83v), are often but not exclusively worn by young grooms.[51] No one in the scene of *Afrasiyab on the Iranian Throne* (fol. 105r) wears any form of Safavid headdress since all the figures are Turanians. Here instead the men sport embroidered domical hats, perhaps made of felt, that are either brimless, bordered with fur, or have an upturned brim, and turbans with low ***kulah***s instead of the taj.

Courtiers in the *Shahnama* tend to wear one style of clothing: a silk or cotton ankle-length robe, worn over a thin undershirt, that fastened either under the arm or in front (FIG. 76). This is partially covered by a surcoat with slits for the arms and long sleeves that hang in back. In the *Shahnama*

Fig. 77. Detail of folio 422r: *Jamasp Arrives before Isfandiyar*

Fig. 78. Belt bearing the name of Shah Isma'il. Iran, probably Tabriz, 1507–8. Damascened steel, filigree arabesque gold plaques, and crimson velvet, length 33⅞ in. (86 cm). Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul (2/1842)

these robes are either plain or patterned. A variation on this is a long-sleeved, knee-length shirt worn under a short-sleeved jacket that reaches below the knee (fol. 135v) or a short-sleeved, ankle-length robe (FIG. 77). In the manuscript men's shoes are flat with pointed toes and worn over soft leather boots (fol. 413r). Around their waists, laborers and other male figures in some illustrations wear cloth sashes, but grandees invariably don belts with metal medallions.[52] While the only remaining textiles that might once have been part of the early Safavids' robes are patches of fine silk sewn together, a belt of the type depicted in the manuscript is extant. Inscribed with the name of Shah Isma'il and dated 1507–8, the belt consists of six steel medallions inlaid with gold and separated by bands of velvet (FIG. 78). With the exception of one medallion that is ovoid in shape and set with turquoise, the rest are lobed lozenges containing split palmette-leaf scrolls and in one case the figure of a deer.

In many ways women's attire in the *Shahnama* conforms to that of men. Over a long underdress, women wear two or three layers, the outermost being a short-sleeved surcoat, plain or decorated. One of these robes buttons at the neck only, revealing the dress or shirt underneath it. Under her skirts she wears trousers that are tight at the ankle and loose around the thighs. The women in the *Shahnama* all wear some form of the hijab, a headscarf that usually is white and hangs in back, covering the hair. Some suspend a strand of pearls, attached at the temples, from one side of their headscarf to the other so that it hangs under the chin. In *The Birth of Zal*, many of

Fig. 79. Detail of folio 61v: *The Birth of Zal*

the women have looped a cord over their arms, but its function is unclear, since it is too long to be a hair ornament and has a gold decoration near its fringe (FIG. 79).

The parameters of this essay permit only a cursory treatment of carpets and related textiles, which have been the subject of innumerable publications.[53] Compared with the corpus of extant sixteenth-century Persian carpets, those in the *Shahnama* are striking for their bold palettes and irregular shapes. Nonetheless, a carpet such as the one in the niche in folio 28v, with a turquoise ground decorated in black and white vine scrolls and a red border with white pseudo-Kufic, generally conforms to certain late fifteenth-century norms, except that its colors are unusually bright, and it has no central medallion or evident repeating pattern. Shaped carpets are known from the Safavid period, but what are now lost or perhaps never existed are carpets with the range of designs found in the *Shahnama*, including leopard skin (fol. 56v), orange cloud scrolls on a black ground (fol. 74v), and gold scrolls on a green ground (FIG. 80). Two medallion carpets are depicted toward the end of the manuscript (FIG. 81; see also fol. 658v), which may reflect a growth in popularity of this design in the 1530s, but it certainly was not introduced then, since early sixteenth-century medallion carpets are attested. One final type of carpet is worth mentioning. In the middle of a larger green-and-blue carpet, Kay Khusrau kneels on a beige-and-white rug that appears to be folded into a quarter its size (FIG. 82). This type of carpet is thought to have been made of felt specifically to be laid over another carpet. Soft and folded, this rug would have been comfortable for sitting or kneeling.

Far rarer than Safavid carpets are extant awnings, though fragments may exist in some collections.[54] Whereas few carpets in the manuscript contain central medallions, fourteen of the thirty-four illustrated canopies have them. The decoration of their fields ranges from repeating cloud bands or vine scrolls to animal combats. Geometric patterns combined with animals or vegetal scrolls appear on a number of other awnings, one of which recalls the magnificent awning in the frontispiece of the *Bustan* of Sa'di of 1488–89.[55] Others simply have vine scrolls covering their whole field. While some include narrow borders in contrasting colors akin to those on carpets, others have only the outer border, which would have been made of cotton and was loose enough to flutter in the breeze. Colorful lozenge patterns, stripes, stars, and rosettes characterize these borders. In the *Shahnama*, awnings function as giant shades for people sitting or lying in tents, individuals enthroned in the outdoors, and figures seated on carpets on the ground. While awnings usually appear behind rulers and other notables, the presence of one in an encampment suggests that they were used wherever exposure to the sun would be uncomfortable (fol. 241r). As with the carpets, the palette of the awnings may be fanciful and geared more toward harmonizing with the compositions in which they appear than toward reproducing actual examples. Nonetheless, the way in which the awnings were raised and their relationship to tents provide an insight into royal Safavid encampments.

Razm: Fighting and Hunting

Much of the *Shahnama* centers on war. Characters prepare for it in parleys, hunts, and tests of manhood; they stalk and attack their enemies; they mourn their dead. In many scenes all the figures, including horses and elephants, wear armor.[56] Moreover, soldiers wield an assortment of weapons, some of which are analogous to extant pieces and some of which appear no longer to exist. Certain figures have exceptional armor or a special weapon, but most soldiers fight with an

Fig. 80. Detail of folio 649r: *Burzuy Brings Nushirvan the Book "Kalila and Dimna"*

Fig. 81. Detail of folio 538r: *The Coronation of the Infant Shapur II*

Fig. 82. Detail of folio 225v: *The Shah's War Prizes Are Pledged*

Fig. 83. Detail of folio 308v: *Kay Khusrau Fetes Rustam beneath the Jewel Tree*

Fig. 84. Detail of folio 36v: *Faridun Strikes Down Zahhak*

array of swords, daggers, lances, maces, bows, and arrows. In this section unique weapons and armor are considered first, followed by the arms and armor that are standard in the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp.

Unlike almost all the other characters in the manuscript, Rustam is consistently recognizable by his armor. This comprises a leopard-skin helmet, often worn over a traditional metal helmet, and a tiger-skin cuirass, or breast and back armor. The cuirass, known as *babr-i bayan* in Persian, may originally have been made of beaver skin, but a shift in the definition of *babr* to mean "tiger" has resulted in the tiger-skin cuirass becoming one of Rustam's standard iconographic traits.[57] According to the epic, Rustam took the head of the White Div, whom he had killed in the last of his seven courses, and fashioned a helmet from it. Despite this, beginning in the fifteenth century he is largely depicted wearing a leopard-skin helmet, possibly an allusion to his skill as a hunter or his bravery when threatened by wild animals.[58] In Tahmasp's *Shahnama* Rustam is portrayed only five times without it: when he is still young, slaying the white elephant (fol. 92v) or catching his horse, Rakhsh (fol. 109r); when he laments the death of his son Suhrab (fols. 155r, 156v); and when he is depicted wearing a lion's-head helmet (FIG. 83), a deviation from the norm that is attributable to the individualism of the artist Dust Muhammad rather than a narrative imperative.

The other iconographic feature associated with a specific character is the ox-head mace wielded by Faridun. This mace had been created by blacksmiths at Faridun's request and according to his own design, perhaps as a memorial to Birmaya, the cow who had nurtured him as a child. Even before Faridun was born, Zahhak had dreamed that a young prince with that name would bring his rule to an end by smashing him with such a mace (FIG. 84), so the weapon was

Fig. 85. Ox-head mace. Iran, Qajar period, 19th century. Steel and gold, 28¾ x 4¾ x 5¾ in. (72.9 x 12 x 14.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1882)

endowed with great significance as the instrument with which good would vanquish evil. While Faridun appears in numerous illustrations in the *Shahnama*, he holds the ox-head mace only when he is using it. At other times, one of his courtiers is detailed to carry it.[59] However, later in the epic Rustam and other Iranian heroes bear the ox-head mace,[60] which continued to function as a symbol of Iranian legitimacy. Even if such maces were ever used in antiquity, no evidence of their survival into Safavid times exists. In the nineteenth century ox-head maces were produced as souvenirs and exported to Europe.[61] Today they can be found in museum collections in North America, Europe, and Iran (FIG. 85).

Fig. 86. Two arrows. Turkey or Iran, probably 16th century. Wood, textile, lacquer, steel, gold, and copper, length (a) 25¾ in. (65.4 cm); (b) 26 in. (65.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.2591a, b)

Fig. 87. Detail of folio 272v: *The Combat of Rustam and Chingish*

Fig. 88. Bow. Iran, late 16th–early 17th century. Steel, length 37 in. (94 cm). Furusiyya Art Foundation (R 995)

In the many single combats and battles depicted in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, the protagonists begin with bows and arrows, called "the Iranians' oldest and most typical weapons."[62] Arrows of the period with gold damascened steel tips (FIG. 86) reveal the level of craftsmanship lavished on expensive weaponry. They have faceted heads in pyramidal form that presumably were designed to inflict serious damage. *The Combat of Rustam and Ashkabus* (fol. 268v) depicts the two heroes shooting at each other at point-blank range, with one bow strung but not drawn and the other bent before the arrow flies. While Rustam's arrows are simply tucked in his belt, those of Ashkabus appear to be held in a quiver, which is hidden behind his blue-and-gold bow case. In other paintings (FIG. 87; see also fol. 271r), quivers are suspended on the soldier's right side; bow cases, on the left. While early Safavid lacquered composite bows consisting of wood, bone, and sinew may all have disappeared, one late sixteenth- to early seventeenth-century steel bow (FIG. 88) reveals the continuing use of such weapons, if only for sport, once artillery had been introduced to Iran.

Long swords, or sabers, most often are curved and widen slightly at the end near the point. Their scabbards can be plain black with gold chapes, medallions, and mouthpieces (fol. 30v), entirely gold (fol. 34v), jeweled gold (fol. 225v), or

Fig. 89. Detail of folio 42v: *Faridun Tests His Sons*

white with gold fittings (fol. 29v) or diaper-pattern ornaments (fol. 402r), indicating that they are made of shagreen. Their hilts are either slightly bent (fol. 225v) or straight (fol. 245r) with gold quillons ending in triangular knobs. The swords and daggers that have survived until today often have been cut down or reshaped, among them a sword with the titles of Shah Tahmasp that has been significantly shortened at the hilt end, has a replacement hilt, and has lost the tapering tip that characterizes the swords in the *Shahnama* (FIG. 90).[63] Another, slightly later saber (FIG. 91) adheres more closely to the shape of early sixteenth-century Safavid swords. Although the figures in the *Shahnama* usually hold their swords with one hand (FIG. 89), scholars have suggested that large swords such as the one with the name of Shah Tahmasp were wielded with two.[64] When not in use, swords were suspended from their owners' belts by two cords attached to the top and middle of the hilt, fitting under the bow case on the left thigh.

Other bladed weapons include several types of dagger. Some, such as the dagger tucked in Salm's belt in folio 42v, have I-shaped hilts, while others, such as the example in folio 153v (FIG. 92), have bulbous ornaments at the top of the hilt

Fig. 90. Sword of Shah Tahmasp. Iran, 1524–76; probably altered in Lahore, Pakistan, 19th century. Blade: watered steel inlaid with gold; quillon and mounts: steel inlaid with gold; scales: walrus ivory(?); scabbard: wood, stamped leather; chape: silver inlaid with niello, length 42½ in. (108 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (3378/1, 2[IS])

Fig. 91. Saber. Iran or Turkey, blade: second half of the 16th century; fittings: 18th–19th century. Steel, horn, wood, and leather, length 30⅞ in. (78.5 cm). Furusiyya Art Foundation (R 224)

Fig. 92. Detail of folio 153v: *Suhrab Gains the Upper Hand: The Second Day*

Fig. 93. Detail of folio 346r: *The Final "Joust of the Rooks": Gudarz versus Piran*

and downturned quillons that may be a stylization of earlier dragon-shaped quillons. Not many dagger blades are visible, since they are worn sheathed or are sunk into their victims, but the blade in folio 153v is curved and is wide at the top, tapering to a point. Some daggers in the manuscript are smaller and straighter than most of those carried by soldiers and heroes in the *Shahnama*. For example, Piran's dagger in folio 346r (FIG. 93), which he has just pulled from his own back, resembles a mid-sixteenth century example in form, if not in surface decoration (FIG. 94). Lances, which appear in many battle scenes and jousts, vary primarily in the shape of their points. Some have a simple triangular point on one end and, on the other, a longer point with a bulbous joint where the wood meets the metal (fol. 519r). In other examples the two ends are more dramatically differentiated, with the simple "business" end contrasting with a gold finial that features two triangular sections separated by a knob (FIG. 95). These lances double as flagpoles. A further weapon to appear in the manuscript is the war hammer, depicted in the foreground of folio 59v. Its narrow, pointed head resembles those of Ottoman war hammers, though the example in the *Shahnama* is gold instead of silvery steel.[65]

Fig. 94. Dagger. Iran, mid-16th century. Steel, jade, and gold, length 8 in. (20.3 cm). Furusiyya Art Foundation (R-330)

Fig. 95. Detail of folio 257v: *The Iranians on Mount Hamavan Attack by Night*

Maces abound in the *Shahnama* but follow only a few models. In addition to the ox-head mace, flanged maces in various sizes and shapes, with or without decoration, figure in numerous episodes, such as the boy Rustam slaying the white elephant with a gold mace with contrasting black arabesque designs (FIG. 96), or Rustam raising his angular flanged mace in *The Night Battle of Kay Khusrau and Afrasiyab* (fol. 367v). Fan-shaped flanged maces (FIG. 97) appear often, but examples with round heads are rarer (fol. 98v). Flails also occur in the *Shahnama* but do not seem to survive in modern collections.[66] All except one, which appears to be ceremonial, have three rectangular metal pendants suspended from chains that attach to a ring at the end of the bar. Clearly visible in folio 138r (FIG. 98), the flail functioned in the same way as a mace.

As the colorful garments donned by the soldiers in the *Shahnama* suggest, body armor was worn underneath cloth robes and coats. Vambraces and greaves cover forearms and shins, respectively, and helmets with mail or metal earpieces are worn on the head (FIG. 99; see also fol. 168v). Since coats of mail are mostly invisible, a sixteenth-century mail shirt in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (FIG. 100) may or may not have been what the Safavids envisioned when

Fig. 96. Detail of folio 92v: *Rustam Slays the White Elephant*

Fig. 97. Detail of folio 54v: *Tur Taunts Qubad*

Fig. 98. Detail of folio 138r: *Pilsam Fights Four of the Seven Champions*

Fig. 99. Detail of folio 367v: *The Night Battle of Kay Khusraw and Afrasiyab*

Fig. 100. Shirt of mail. Turkey, 16th century. Steel, 34½ x 54 in. (87.6 x 137.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Bashford Dean, in memory of Alexander McMillan Welch, 1949 (49.120.4)

Fig. 101. Helmet. Iran, first half of the 16th century. Steel damascened with gold, height 24¾ in. (63 cm), diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm). The Art and History Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (LTS1995.2.41)

they looked at the battle scenes in the *Shahnama*, especially since it does not have metal plates or other elements found, for example, on slightly earlier Turkmen armor. Although helmets with earflaps appear in Ilkhanid paintings of the early fourteenth century, by the late fifteenth century helmets with mail covering the ears and neck appear as often as those with earflaps.[67] The array of helmets in folio 367v reveals the same interest in metals of contrasting colors as that found in implements used at feasts. Moreover, the high point rising from the top of the helmet, sometimes holding a feather, recalls the taj of the Safavid turban. One extant example has a similar projection, fashioned in twelve facets like the twelve gores of the taj (FIG. 101). For this reason, it has been attributed to Safavid Iran and dated to the first half of the sixteenth century.[68] Its domical form and the use of gold damascening in contrast to the steel ground parallel those found in the *Shahnama*.

While many of the shields depicted in the manuscript are colorfully decorated with gold arabesques or bright spiral designs, the only surviving analogous pieces are made of cane wrapped in colored thread (FIG. 102). The best-preserved early Safavid example is made of steel inlaid with gold and decorated with filigree, rubies, turquoise, and pearls (FIG. 103). Its spiral design corresponds to that of the cane shields, but its decoration of inlaid-gold cloud bands, real and imaginary animals, and humans reveals an extremely high level of craftsmanship and imagination. Even in a manuscript with as much detail as Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, one would be hard-pressed to find the exact match to this shield, but its quality and the fact that it bears a signature argue in favor of its having a royal provenance.[69]

Some but not all battle scenes in the manuscript contain horses dressed in full armor (FIG. 104). It is often highly decorative but difficult to connect with any certainty to extant examples. While some suits appear to be made of rectangular plates as one would expect, others have medallions and no apparent joints in their parts. Shaffrons, the armor for horses' heads, are attested, and some include the same level of ornamentation found on other early Safavid objects. Engraved floral and vine-scroll patterns cover one such shaffron in the Metropolitan's collection (FIG. 105). Much of Safavid arms and armor has close parallels with that of the Ottomans, into whose hands so much of it fell as a result of the many campaigns the two empires fought against each other. Yet the *Shahnama* does reinforce the idea that the Safavid armory was rich and varied, even if so little remains today.

This investigation of some, but not all, of the objects that comprise the physical context of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*

Fig. 102. Shield. Iran, 16th century. Cane covered in silk, steel boss overlaid with gold, and gold appliqués set with turquoise and other stones, diam., overall 23⅜ in. (59.5 cm), of center plate 9⅞ in. (25 cm). The Royal Armory, Stockholm (10607)

Fig. 103. Shield. Iran, early 16th century. Steel inlaid with gold, filigree, rubies, turquoise, and pearls, diam. 19¼ in. (48.8 cm). Decorated by Muhammad Mumin Zarnishan. Kremlin Museums, The Armory Chamber, Moscow (OR 176)

Fig. 104. Detail of folio 430r: *Isfandiyar Captures Gurgsar in Combat*

Fig. 105. Horse's head defense (shaffron). Iran, 16th century. Steel, length 23¼ in. (59.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Funds from various donors, 1929 (29.158.621)

poses almost as many questions as it answers. Can we accept the many bottles, platters, shields, and chairs, to name a few of the articles in the illustrations, as analogues for actual items that were used in early sixteenth-century Iran when examples of only some of them survive? Although the artists would not have invested these objects with the same emotional charge as human characters in the narrative, were they motivated to depict them with a high level of accuracy, or was it sufficient to render them as types? For any given object that recurs through the manuscript, diversity of decorative detail and in some cases of shape and color is the rule. This could be attributed to pictorial requirements such as color balance or compositional harmony. Yet, a sufficient number of extant late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Safavid objects parallel the painted versions to suggest plausibly that the artists of the *Shahnama* sought to portray the stuff of their world, and particularly of the Safavid court, as they saw it. Inanimate objects may possess deep symbolic meaning, but they do not have souls, and those who make or depict them cannot be accused of usurping the role of God the creator. Instead the objects in the *Shahnama* serve to ground the illustrations in a recognizable reality so that those reading the text and looking at the pictures could pore over their details with pleasure while grasping the essential meaning of the image.

NOTES

1 A. H. Morton in Michele Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*, translated and introduced by A. H. Morton (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), p. xvi.

2 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 41.

3 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, Eighth–Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982), pp. 248–50. Linda Komaroff, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1992), p. 53, notes that this is the most common shape of Timurid metalwork. In p. 69 n. 25, Komaroff states that she knows of forty such jugs, and Ernst Grube indicated that he had a list of over one hundred such pieces. Epigraphic evidence suggests that on some examples made in the Safavid period, Shi'i inscriptions were favored over poetic ones, reflecting the sectarian reality of the new regime, if not a change in function for the jug from container of wine to container of water. See also A[ssadullah] S[ouren] Melikian[C]hirvani, "Safavid Metalwork: A Study in Continuity," *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 3–4 (Summer–Autumn 1974), pp. 543–95.

4 James W. Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," in *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576*, edited by Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby, exh. cat. (Milan: Skira, 2003), p. 216. Allan notes that this type of jug held water, but the presence of inscriptions alluding to wine as well as water on jugs of this type "suggests that the distinction [between a wine vessel and a water jug] was not always adhered to."

5 Ibid., p. 205.

6 Ibid., p. 207, quoting Membré and Antonio Tenreiro, who traveled with the embassy of Balthazar Pessoa to Shah Isma'il in 1523–24.

7 Regina Krahl, "Chinese Ceramics in Early Safavid Iran," in *Hunt for Paradise*, edited by Thompson and Canby, pp. 257–58; John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1956).

8 Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), p. 261.

9 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 39.

10 Folios 22v, 24v, 26v, 35r, 38v, 40v, 43v, 60v, 66v, 69v, 79v, 80v, 85v, 105r, 175v, 180v, 181v, 183v, 189v, 223r, 226v, 261r, 300v, 308v, 385v, 403v, 451r, 538r, 547r, 655v, and 731r.

11 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 205.

12 Silver ewers appear in folios 66v, 175v, and 385v. Ceramic ewers are found in folios 39v and 68v. A ceramic jug is in folio 79v, and earthenware pouring vessels appear in folios 81v, 527v, and 742v.

13 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 216.

14 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Le Chant du monde: L'Art de l'Iran safavide, 1501–1736*, exh. cat. (Paris: Somogy; Musée du Louvre, 2007), p. 164.

15 Stuart Cary Welch et al., *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501–1576* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1979), pp. 168–71, no. 63.

16 Incense burners appear in folios 26v, 29v, 34v, 41v, 44v, 46v, 50v, 61v, 65v, 69v, 78v, 83v (2), 85v, 87v, 164v (2), 185v (2), 195r, 201r, 236r, 261r, 516v (2), and 639v.

17 See, for example, two such incense burners in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1976.102 and 17.190.1716).

18 Torches appear in folios 28v, 102v, 183v, 195r, 442v, 543r, 633v, 731r, and 742v.

19 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 23.

20 The folios with candlesticks are 28v, 185v, 259v, 266v, 516v, 633v, and 731r. The candles are green, yellow, or white.

21 The Metropolitan Museum of Art dates this candlestick to about 1500, whereas the David Collection, Copenhagen, which has a very similar piece, dates theirs to the fifteenth century. Kjeld von Folsach, *Art from the World of Islam in the David Collection*, rev. and enl. ed. (1990; Copenhagen: David Collection, 2001), p. 326, no. 524.

22 Mark Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India* (London: Alexandria Press, 1997), pp. 117–18. Bernard O'Kane, ed., *The Treasures of Islamic Art in the Museums of Cairo* (Cairo and New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2006), p. 269, no. 29, attributes a lampstand dated 965/1558–59 to Lahore.

23 A pool in the shape of a cartouche appears in folio 195r, and a simple rectangular pool is found in folio 602v. Garden pools with fountainheads are found in folios 10r, 28v, 29v, 56v, 73v, 74v, 77v, 163v, 174r, 195r, 242r, and 649r.

24 Jean During and Zia Mirabdolbaghi, *The Art of Persian Music* (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 1991), p. 99. The authors state that no instruments survive from before 1850.

25 Ibid., pp. 134–35.

26 Sheila R. Canby et al., *Shah 'Abbas: The Remaking of Iran*, exh. cat. (London: British Museum Press, 2009), p. 227, fig. 73.

27 For a general overview of traditional Iranian musical instruments, see www.farabisoft.com/Pages/FarabiSchool/InstrumentsDetails.aspx?lang=en&PID=4&SID=30 (accessed October 17, 2013).

28 During and Mirabdolbaghi, *Art of Persian Music*, p. 104.

29 *Ouds* appear in folios 84v, 110v, 185v, 3●8v, and 731r.

30 Information kindly provided by Kenneth Moore, Frederick P. Rose Curator in Charge, Department of Musical Instruments, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

31 Folios 42v, 81v, 110v, 182v, 190v, 216v, 226v, and 271r.

32 Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings: The Shah-Nameh of Shah Tahmasp*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), pp. 144, 152. Welch alludes to the "simplified painting by Aqa Mirak."

33 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, pp. 23–24 n. 1

34 David Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the "World History" of Rashid al-Din* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp. 46–47, 54–55.

35 Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad, Master of Persian Painting* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1996), p. 70.

36 Mohammed Ali Rajabi et al., *Iranian Masterpieces of Persian Painting*, exh. cat. (Tehran: Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005), p. 47.

37 Ibid., p. 41. The composition of folio 24v is based in part on the illustration of the same scene from the Baisunghur *Shahnama* of 1429–30. Both illustrations contain the weaver, men hammering metal and holding ingots in tongs, a man using the bellows in connection with a furnace, and a tailor cutting cloth. While some tools in the Safavid painting closely resemble those in the Timurid version, others in Tahmasp's *Shahnama* vary in scale, such as the skein holders, which are smaller than the spinning wheel in the earlier painting. Although one could conclude that the Safavid artist was simply relying on the Timurid prototype, it is equally possible that both paintings represent the traditional tools of early premodern Iran.

38 This information was kindly supplied by textile conservators Janina Poskrobko and Nancy Britton of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

39 A[ssadullah] S[ouren] Melikian-Chirvani, "State Inkwells in Islamic Iran," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 44 (1986), p. 70.

40 Ibid., pp. 81–83. One inkwell of the shape in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (41.120a, b) is probably slightly later in date than those with no figural ornament.

41 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 219, no. 8.14.

42 Melikian-Chirvani, "State Inkwells in Islamic Iran," p. 83, in which the year of Isma'il's accession is given as 1502.

43 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 24.

44 Iskandar Beg Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great (Tarik-e 'Alamara-ye 'Abbasi)*, translated by Roger M. Savory, 2 vols. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978), vol. 1, p. 79.

45 This type of *'alam* can be found in folios 33v, 54v, 55v, 57v, 58v, 98v, 100r, 102v, 104r, 111v, 112v, 143r, 151v, 168v, 178r, 204v, 206v, 213r, 232v, 238r, 239v, 241r, 243v, 245r, 252v, 257v, 263r, 265v, 272v, 274v, 279v, 281r, 286v, 291r, 326v, 328r, 342r, 343r, 343v, 360v, 367v, 405v, 406r, 430r, 496r, 519r, 615v, 643v, 671v, and 735r.

46 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 222, no. 8.17.

47 The most complete treatment of Iranian standards from the fourteenth to the twentieth century appears in James Allan and Brian Gilmour, *Persian Steel: The Tanavoli Collection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 253–81.

48 Barbara Brend, "*Jamāl va Jalāl*: A Link between Epochs," in *Safavid Art and Architecture*, edited by Sheila R. Canby (London: British Museum Press, 2002), p. 36 n. 11, quoting Patricia Baker, who in turn was quoting M. Y. Kiani, *Discoveries from Robat-e Sharaf* (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, 1981). This turban cap without a turban wrapped around it is worn by several figures in folio 521v.

49 Ibid., p. 33 and p. 36 n. 13; Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 26.

50 Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia*, p. 24. Membré states that their skirts were white, but in the manuscript they appear in different hues.

51 Folio 225v, in which the servants wear Persian lamb hats with squared-off crowns and contrasting fur brims, is an exception.

52 Layla S. Diba, "Clothing; X. In the Safavid and Qajar Periods," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica, Online Edition*; www.iranicaonline.org/articles/clothing-x (accessed October 17, 2013).

53 A few of the many books devoted to the study of Oriental carpets are Kurt Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets* (1966; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970); Susan Day, ed., *Great Carpets of the World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996); and Jon Thompson, *Milestones in the History of Carpets*, exh. cat. (Milan: Moshe Tabibnia, 2006).

54 Thompson and Canby, eds., *Hunt for Paradise*, p. 294. The textile that may be an awning in the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, probably dates from the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

55 Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, p. 260.

56 Thanks to Pierre Terjanian, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Curator in Charge, Department of Arms and Armor, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for help identifying arms and armor in the *Shahnama*.

57 Abolala Soudavar with Milo Cleveland Beach, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 167 and p. 201 n. 89.

58 B. W. Robinson, *The Persian Book of Kings: An Epitome of the Shahnama of Firdawsi* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), p. 147 n. 1. Robinson states that Rustam's leopard-skin helmet first appears in the 1411 "Anthology of the Timurid Iskandar Sultan."

59 Folios 33v, 34v, 36v, 37v, 43v, 44v, 49v, 50v, 56v, and 59v.

60 Folios 64v, 65v, 66v, 79v, 104r, 121v, 123r, 127v, 130r, 138r, 146r, 151v, 198r, 202v, 204v, 206v, 210v, 216v, 232v, 241r, 251r, 252v, 336v, 343r, 376v, 383v, 413r, and 557v.

61 Filiz Çakir Phillip, "The *Shahnama*: On the Forging of Heroes and Weapons," in *Heroic Times: A Thousand Years of the Persian* Book of Kings, edited by Julia Gonnella and Christoph Rauch (Berlin: Edition Minerva, 2012), p. 63 n. 49.

62 Ibid., p. 61.

63 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 226.

64 Ibid.

65 Bashir Mohamed, *The Arts of the Muslim Knight: The Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection* (Milan: Skira, 2008), p. 260, no. 250.

66 Folios 98v, 138r, 328r, 413r, and 643v.

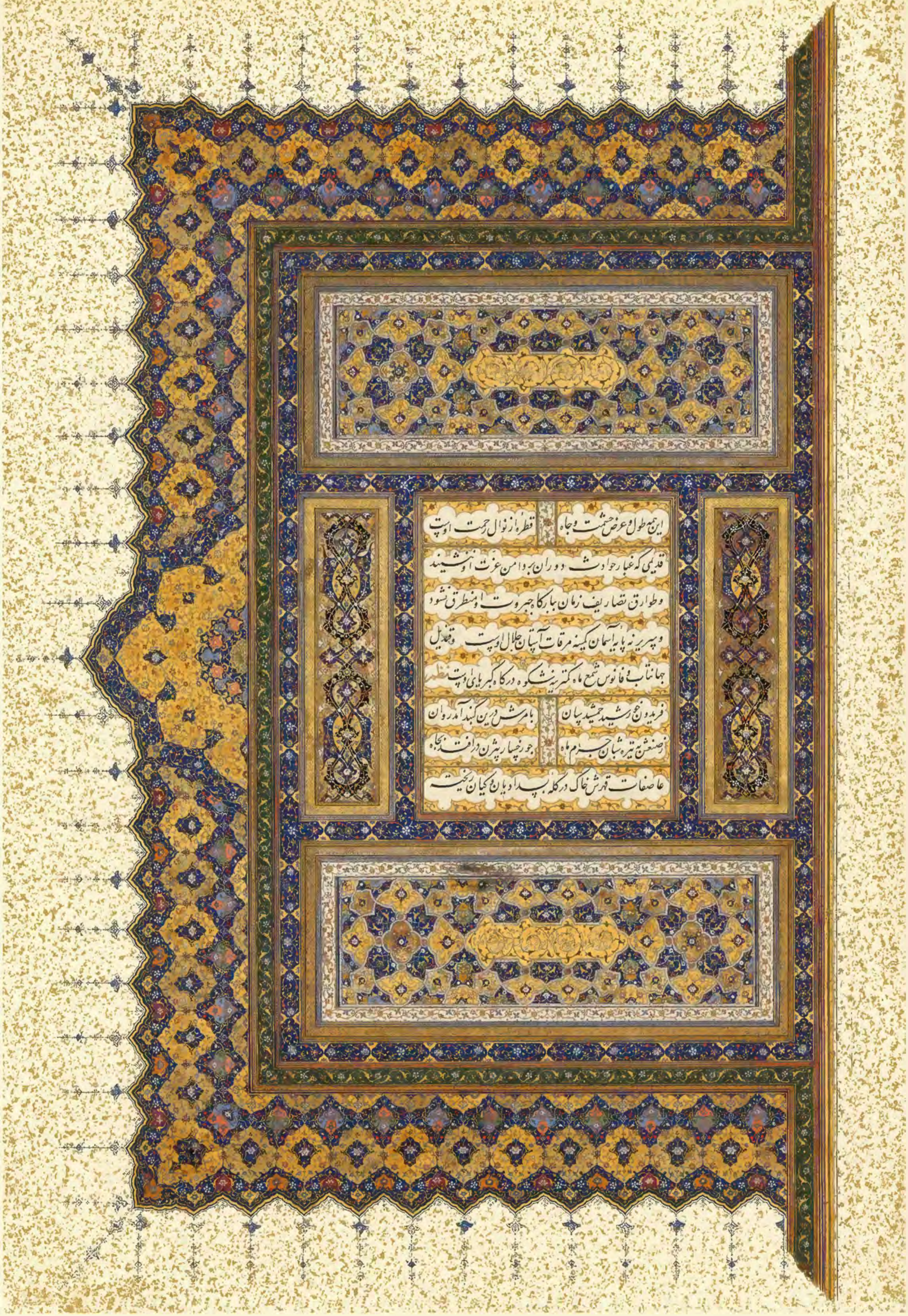
67 Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, p. 135.

68 Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, p. 150.

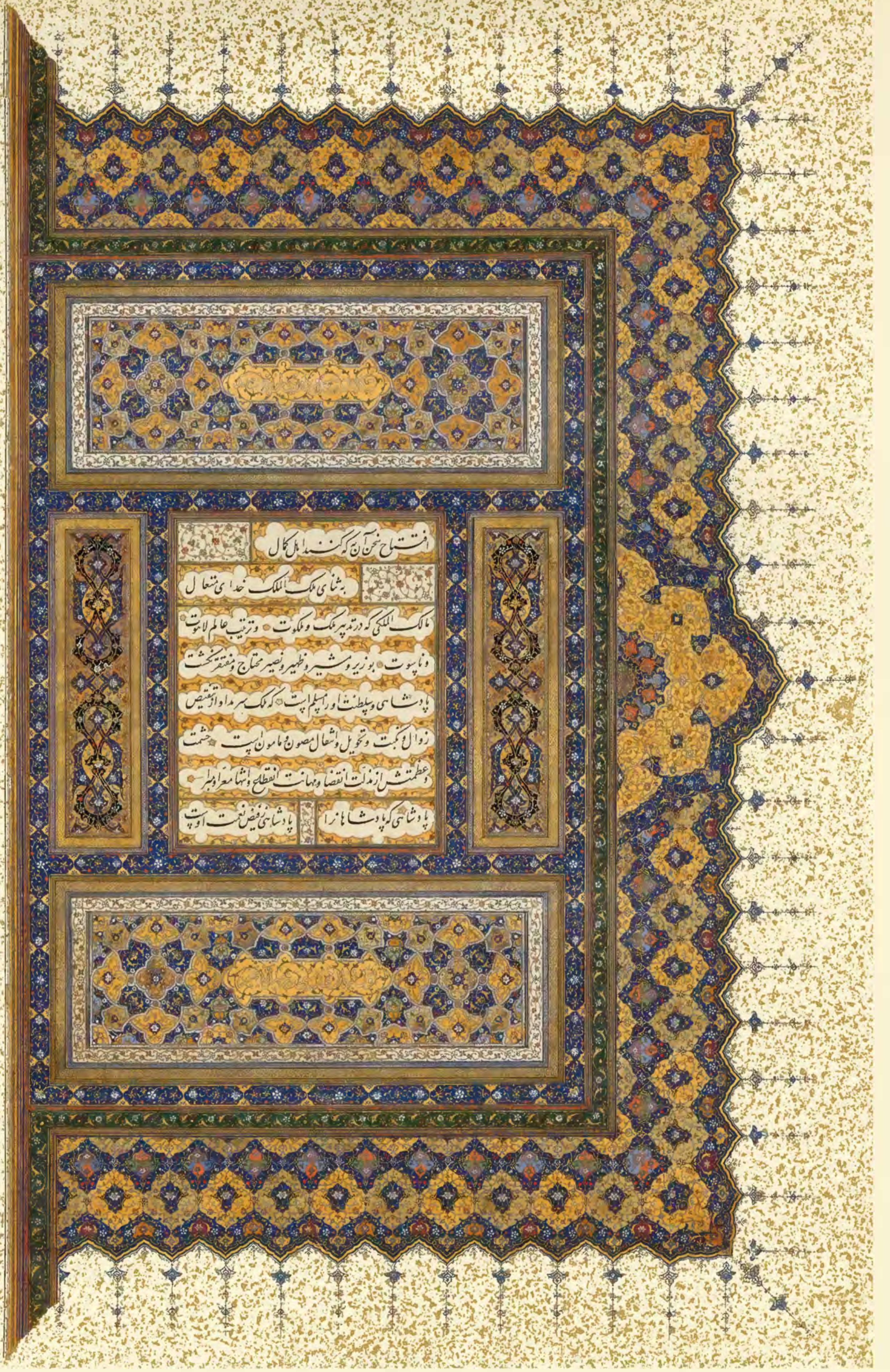
69 Allan, "Early Safavid Metalwork," p. 231.

The SHAHNAMA *of* Shah Tahmasp

THE PERSIAN BOOK OF KINGS



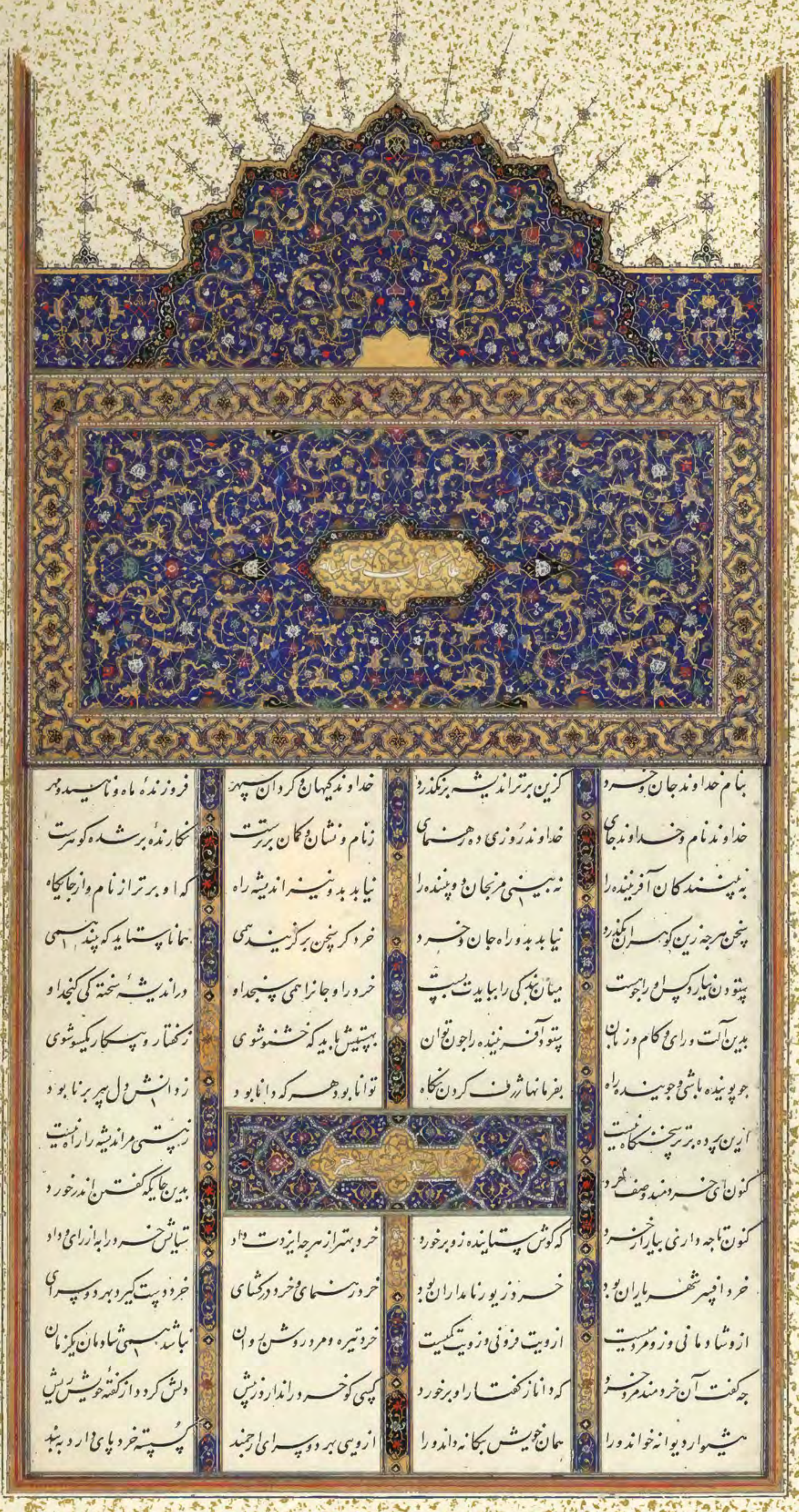
 FOLIOS 2V AND 3R Double-Page Illuminated Frontispiece


افتتاح سخن آن به که کنند اهل کمال
به ثنای ملک الملک خدای متعال
مالک الملکی که در تدبیر ملک و ملکوت و ترتیب عالم لاهوت
و ناسوت بوزیر و مشیر و ظهیر و نصیر محتاج و مفتقر نگشت
پادشاهی و سلطنت او را مسلم است که ملک سرمد او از نقیص
زوال و نکبت و تحویل و انتقال مصون و مامون است حشمت
و عظمتش از مذلت انقضا و مهانت انقطاع و انتها معرا و مبرا
پادشاهی که پادشاهان را
پادشاهی ز فیض نعمت او پ

FOLIO 7R *Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna*

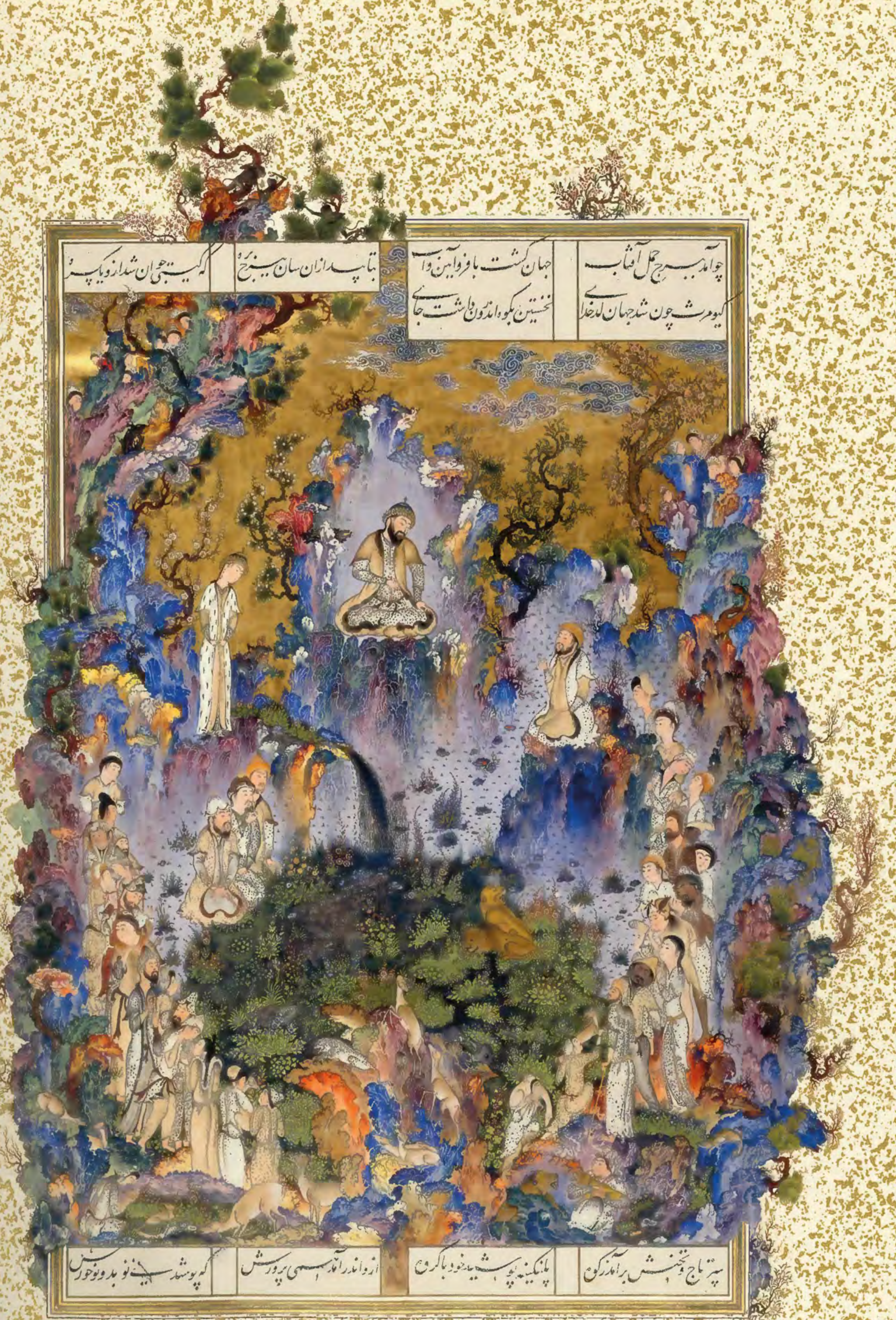
FOLIO 10R *Firdausi Proves His Literary Talents at the Court of Sultan Mahmud*

FOLIO 16R Dedicatory Rosette



FOLIO 16V *In Praise of God and the Intellect*

FOLIO 18V *Firdausi's Parable of the Ship of Shiism*



FOLIO 20V *The Court of Gayumars*

FOLIO 21V *Hushang Slays the Black Div*

کز آباد کردن جهان شاد کرد
جهانی به نیکی ازو یاد کرد
بدان ایزدی جاه و فر کیان
ز نخچیر گور و گوزن ژیان
جدا کرد گاو و خر و گوسفند
به ورز آورید آنچه بد سودمند
وز ایشان بورزید وز ایشان چرید
همی خویشتن تاج را پرورید
ز پویندگان هرچه مویش نکوست
بکشت و بسرشان برآهیخت پوست
چو سنجاب و قاقم ز روباه نرم
چهارم سمورست کش موی گرم
برین گونه از چرم پویندگان
بپوشید بالای گویندگان
ببخشید و گسترد و خورد و سپرد
برفت و جز از نام نیکی نبرد
بسی رنج برد اندران روزگار
با فسون و اندیشهٔ بی شمار
پر از هوش مغز و پر از داد دل
چو پیش آمدش روزگار بهی

FOLIO 23V *Tahmuras Defeats the Divs*

FOLIO 24V *The Court of Jamshid*

FOLIO 25V *The Death of King Mirdas*

خورش کرد بد و گفت کای پادشاه
همیشه زی شاد و فرمان روا
یکی حاجتستم به پیروز شاه
وگرچه مرا نیست این پایگاه
چو ضحاک بشنید گفتار اوی
نهانی ندانست بازار اوی
بفرمود تا دیو چون جفت اوی
همی بوسه داد از بر کفت اوی
مرا دل سراسر پر از مهر تست
همه توشه جانم از چهر تست
گر فرمان دهد تا سر کتف او
ببوسم بر و بر نهم چشم و روی
بدو گفت دادم من این کام تو
بلندی کرد زین مگر نام تو
چو بوسید شد در زمین ناپدید
کس اندر جهان این شگفتی ندید
دو مار سیه از دو کتفش برست
غمی گشت و از هر سوی چاره جست
سرانجام ببرید هر دو ز کفت
سزد گر بمانی بدین در شگفت
چو شاخ درخت آن دو مار سیاه
برآمد دگر باره از کفت شاه

FOLIO 27V *Zahhak Receives the Daughters of Jamshid*

FOLIO 28V *The Nightmare of Zahhak*

FOLIO 29V *Zahhak Is Told His Fate*

FOLIO 30V *Zahhak Slays Birmaya*

FOLIO 31V *Kava Tears Zahhak's Scroll*

FOLIO 32V *Faridun Orders the Ox-Head Mace*

FOLIO 33V *Faridun Crosses the River Dijla*

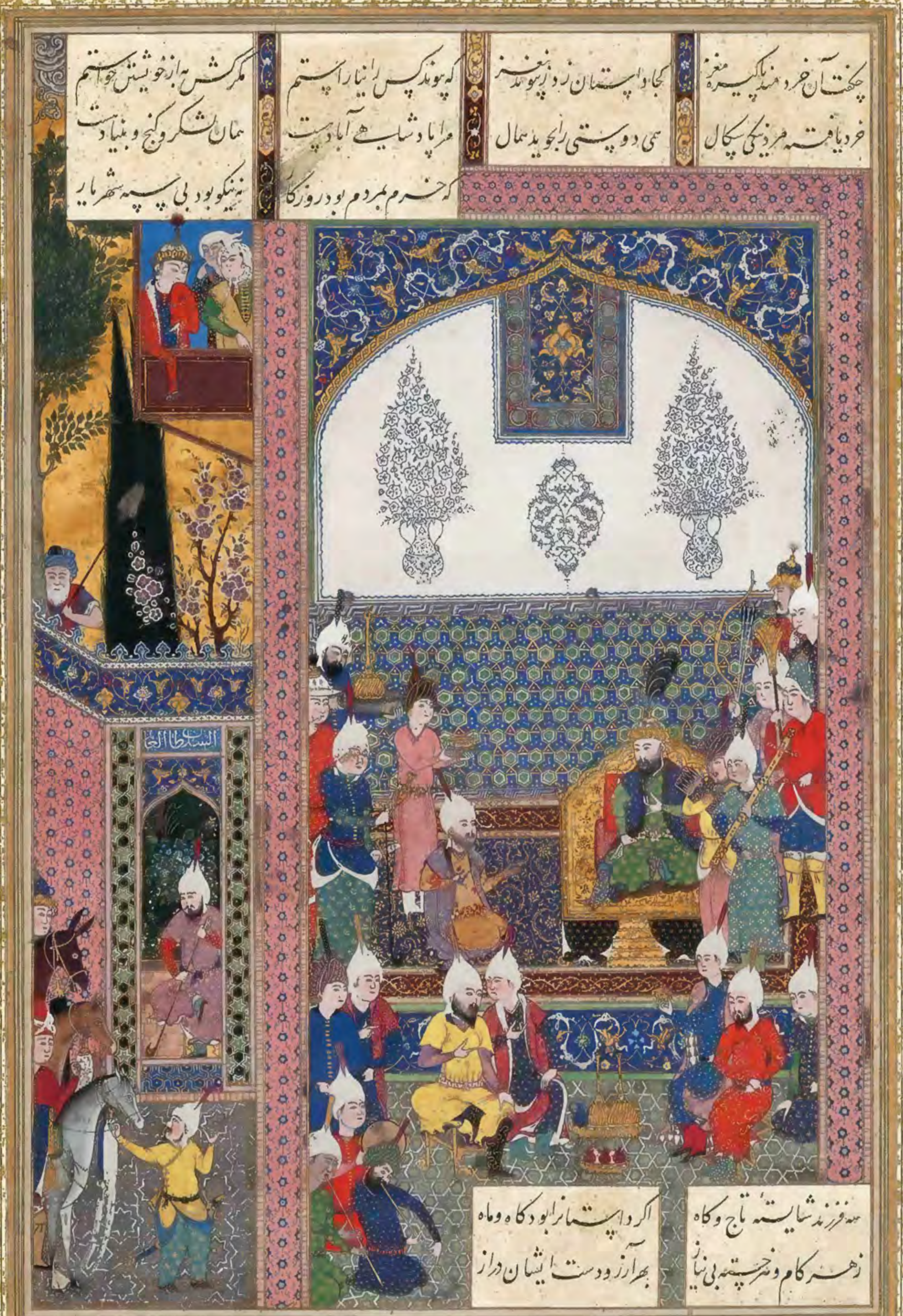
FOLIO 34V *Faridun Enthroned in the Palace of Zahhak*

FOLIO 35R *The Feast of Faridun and Kundrau*

FOLIO 36V *Faridun Strikes Down Zahhak*

FOLIO 37V *The Death of Zahhak*

FOLIO 38V *The Court of Faridun*



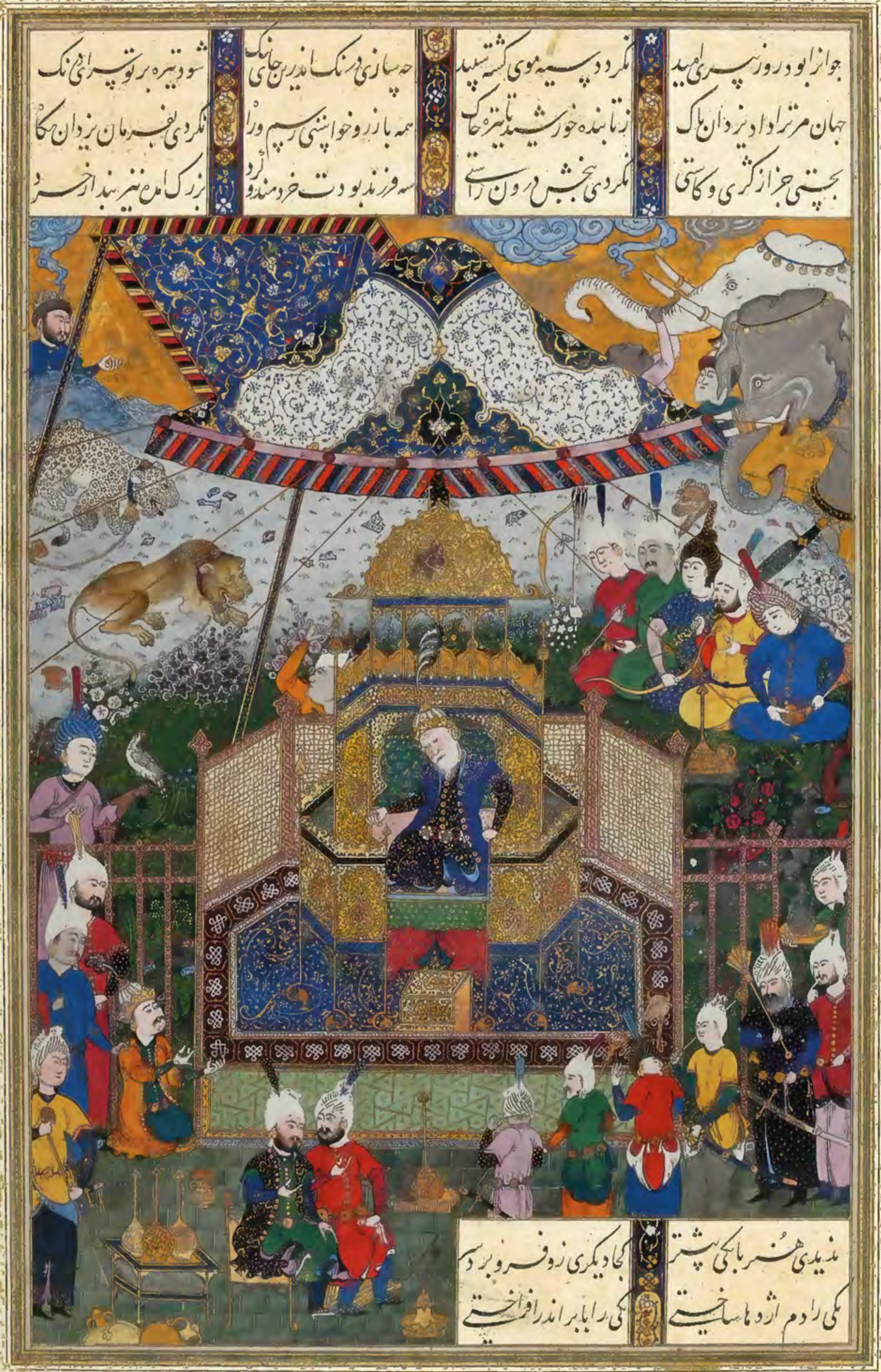
FOLIO 39V *Faridun's Envoy to King Sarv: First Interview*

FOLIO 40V *Faridun's Envoy to King Sarv: Second Interview*

FOLIO 41V *Faridun's Sons with the Daughters of King Sarv*

FOLIO 42V *Faridun Tests His Sons*

FOLIO 43V *Faridun Divides His Kingdom*



FOLIO 44V *Faridun Receives a Message from Salm and Tur*

FOLIO 45V *Faridun Replies to the Threat of Salm and Tur*

FOLIO 46V *Iraj Offers to Visit His Brothers*

FOLIO 47V *Iraj Begs Tur for Mercy*

FOLIO 48V *Tur Decapitates Iraj*

FOLIO 49V *The Lamentation of Faridun*

FOLIO 50V *Manuchihr at the Court of Faridun*

FOLIO 51V *Faridun and Manuchihr Receive an Envoy from Salm and Tur*

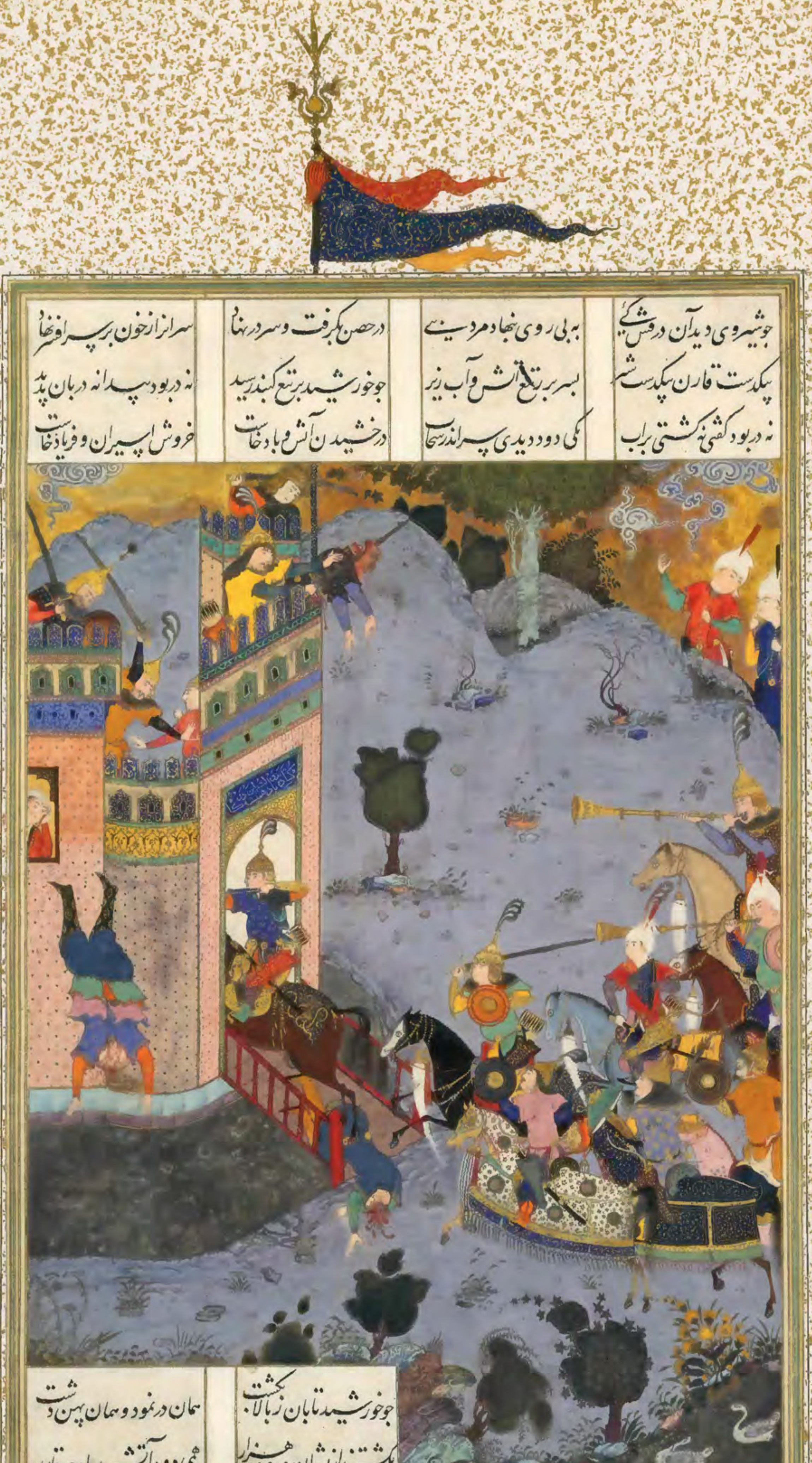
FOLIO 52V *The Envoy Returns to Salm and Tur*

 FOLIO 53V *Salm and Tur Receive the Reply of Faridun and Manuchihr*

FOLIO 54V *Tur Taunts Qubad*

FOLIO 55V *Manuchihr Raises Tur on His Lance*

FOLIO 56V *Faridun Receives the Head of Tur*



 FOLIO 57V *Qaran Captures the Castle of the Alans*

FOLIO 58V *Manuchihr Kills Salm*

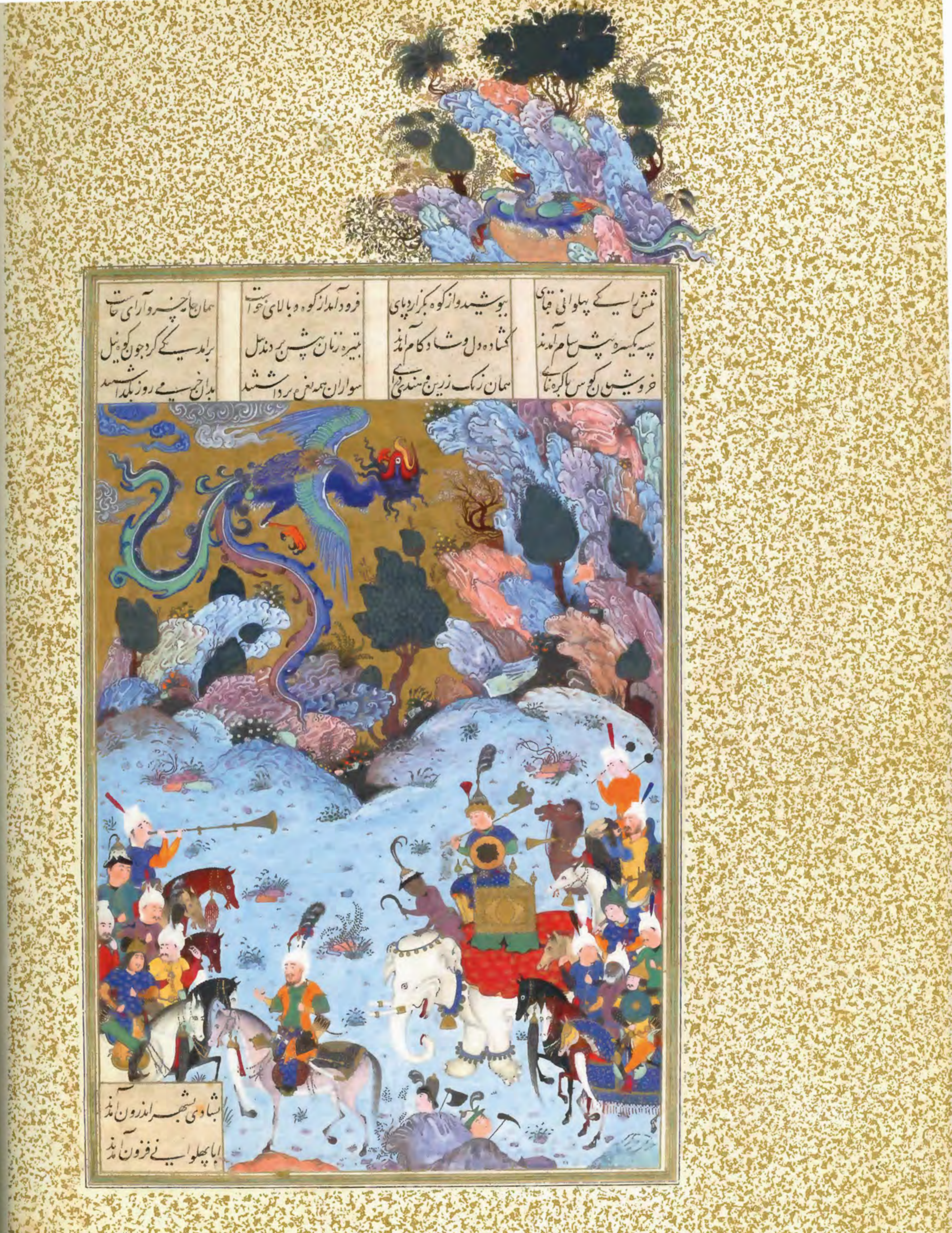
FOLIO 59V *Faridun Embraces Manuchihr*

FOLIO 60V *Manuchihr Enthroned*

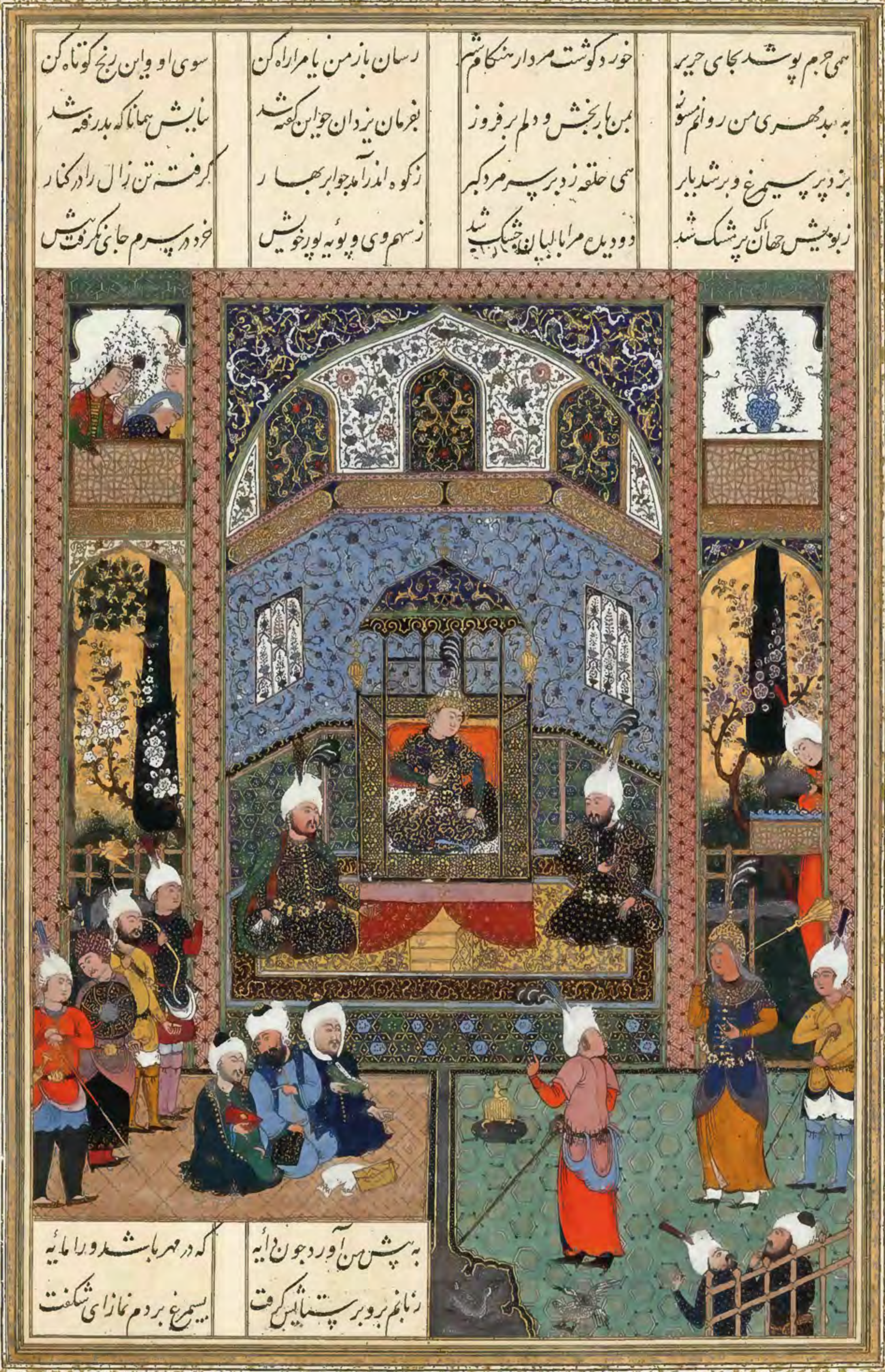
FOLIO 61V *The Birth of Zal*

FOLIO 62V *Zal Is Sighted by a Caravan*

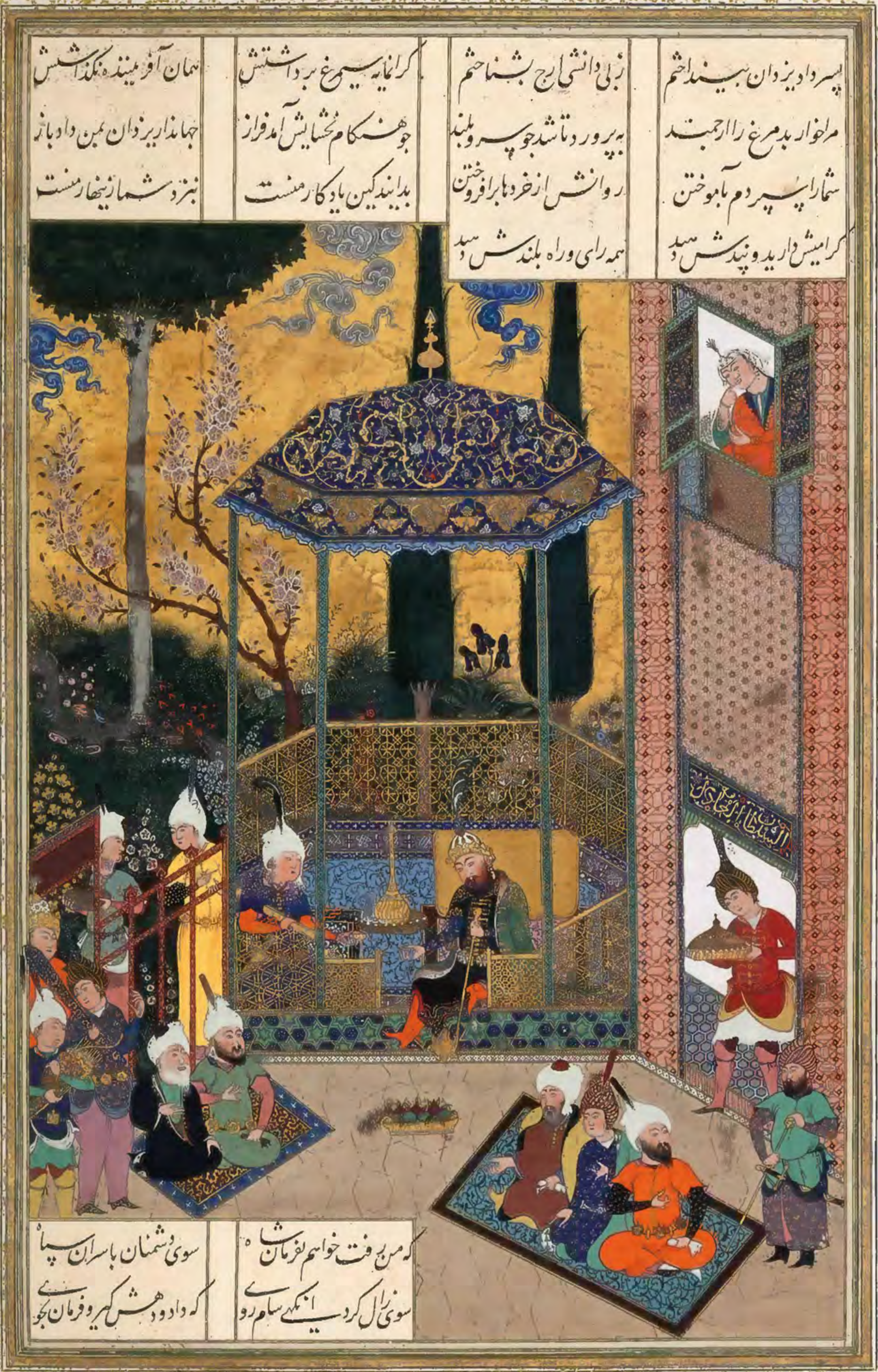
FOLIO 63V *Sam Comes to Mount Alburz*



FOLIO 64V *Sam Returns with Zal*

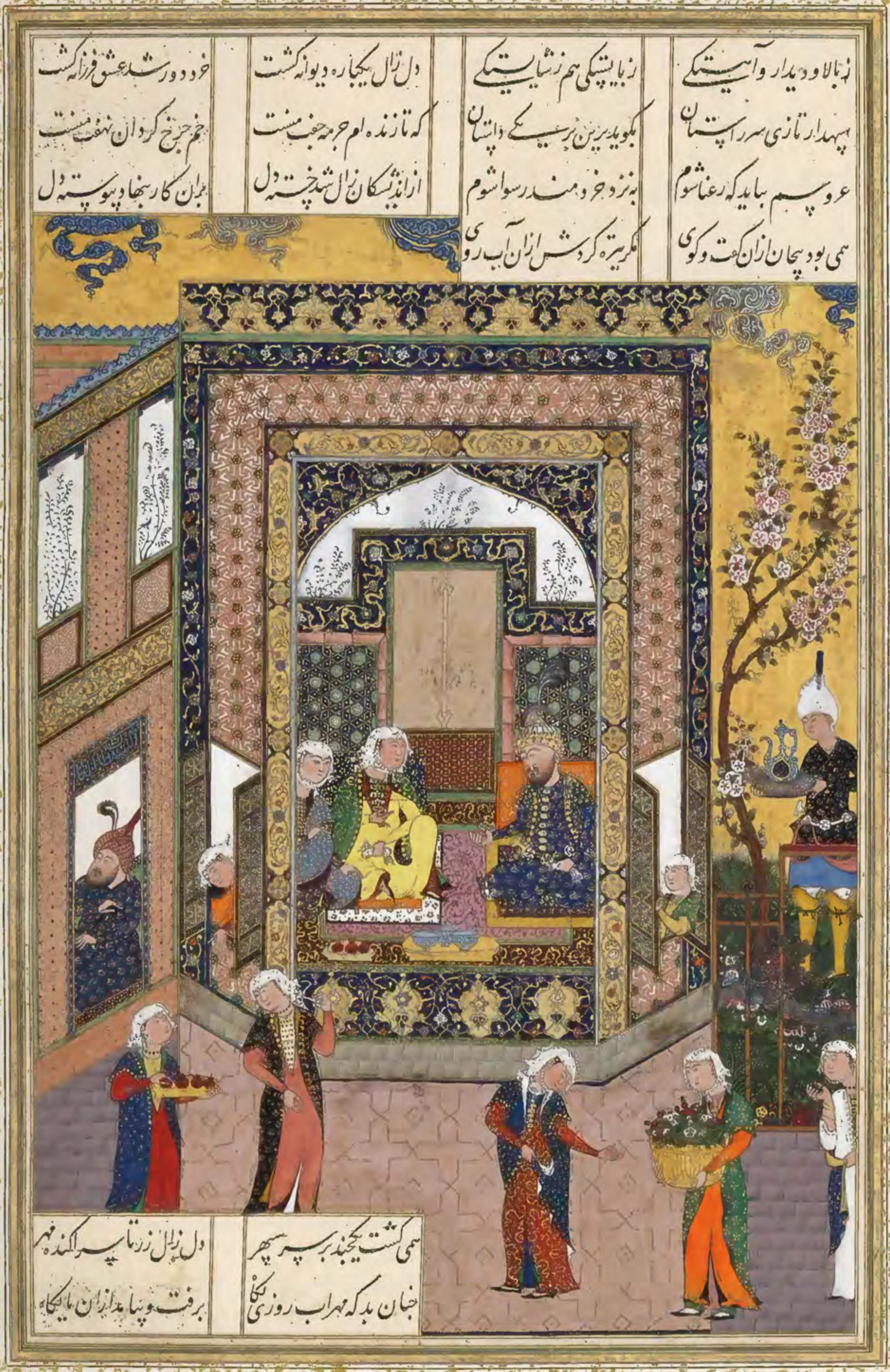


FOLIO 65V *Zal before Manuchihr, Sam, and Qaran*

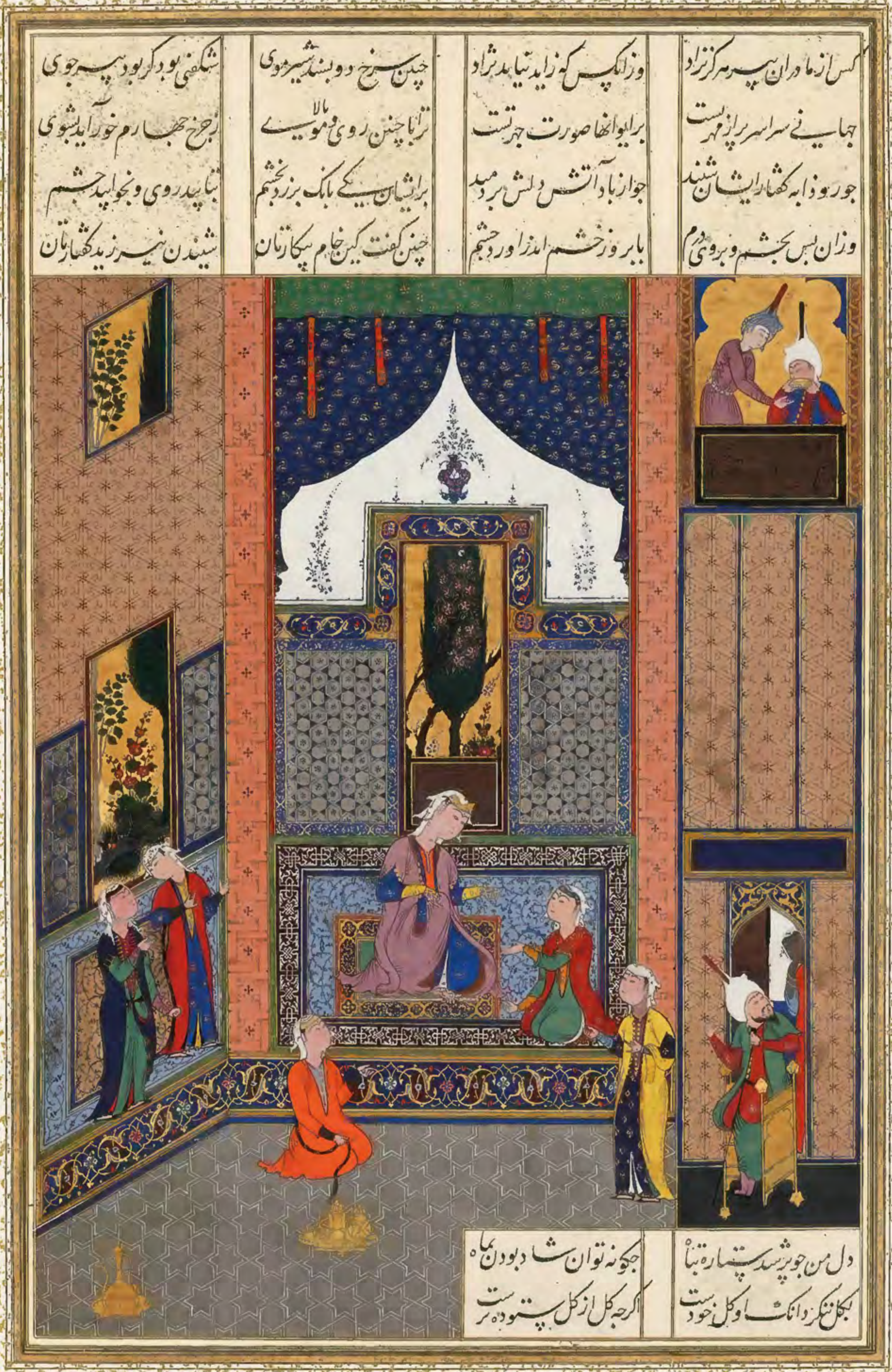


FOLIO 66V *Sam Takes Leave of Zal*

 FOLIO 67V *Zal Receives Mihrab's Homage at Kabul*

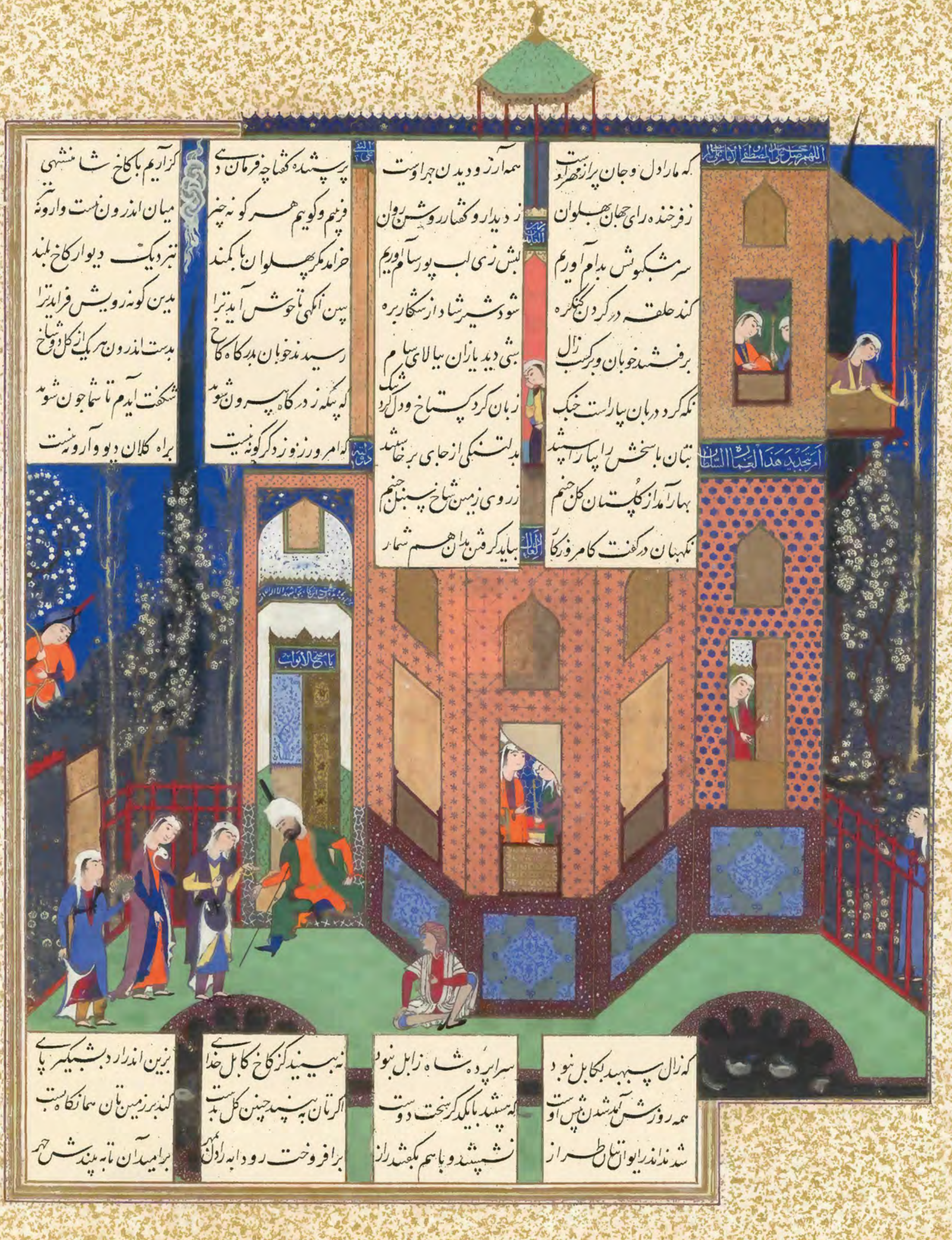


FOLIO 68V *Mihrab Describes Zal to Sindukht and Rudaba*

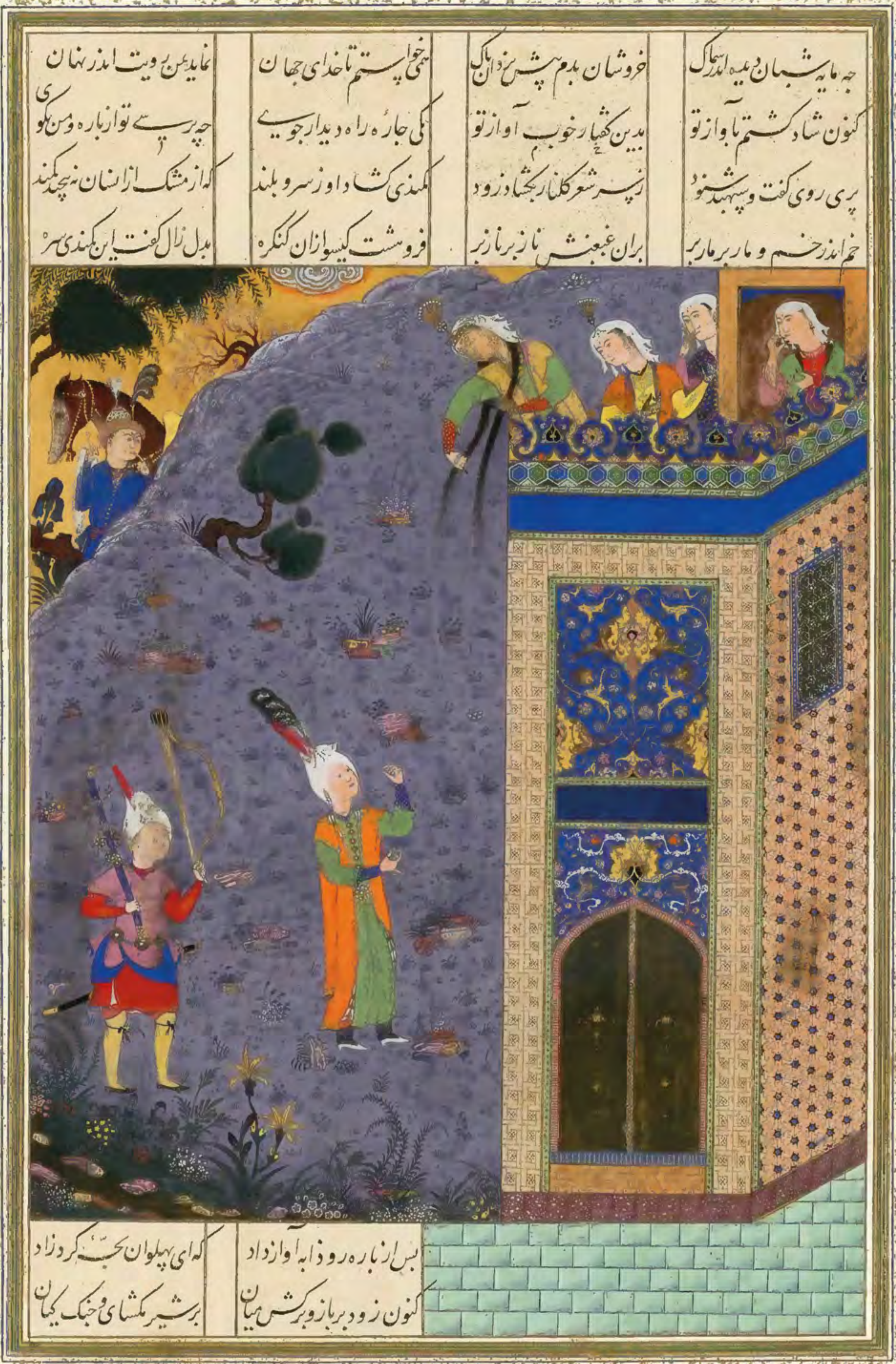


FOLIO 69V *Rudaba Confides in Her Maids*

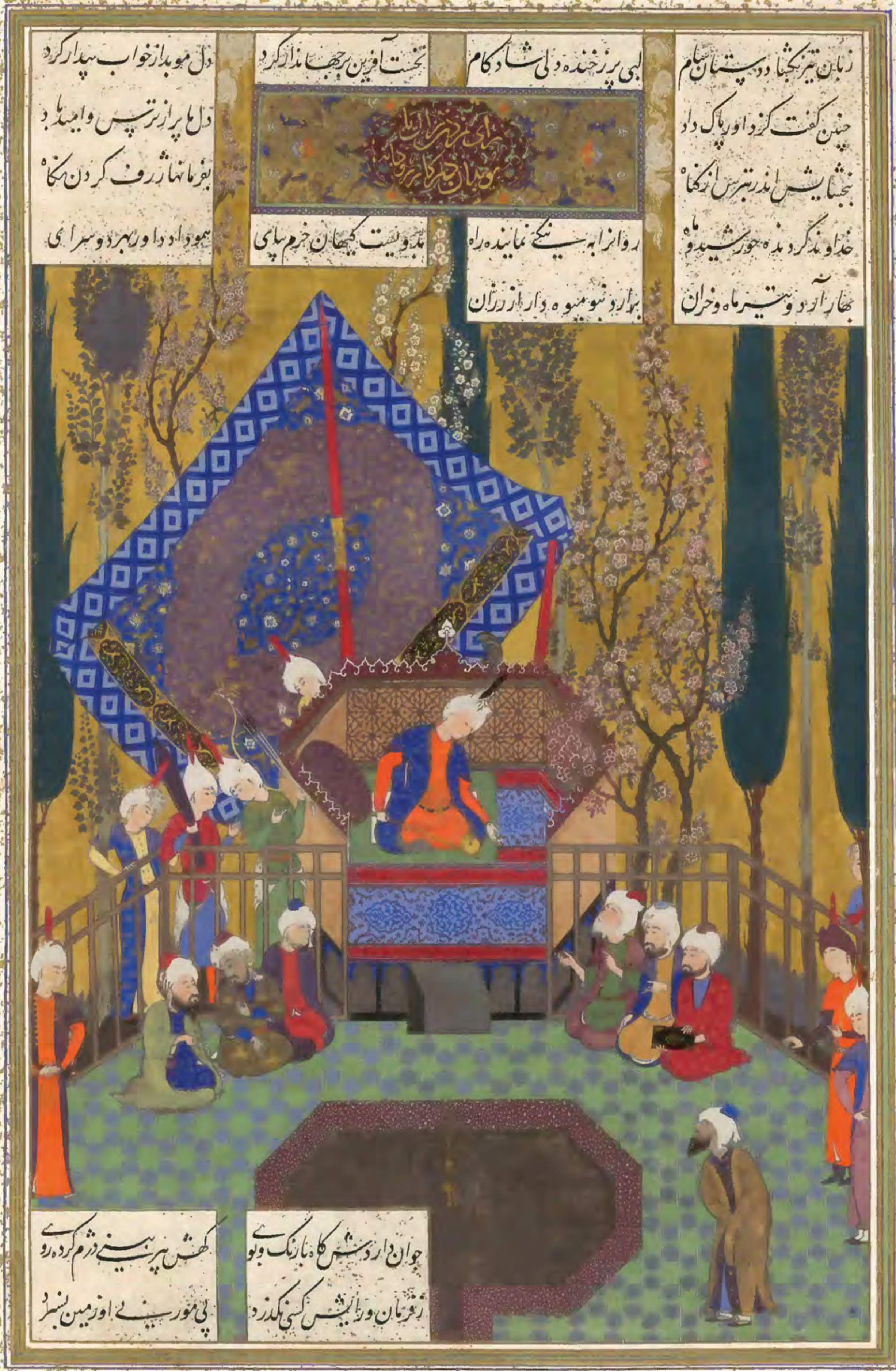
FOLIO 70V *Rudaba's Maids Meet Zal's Page at the River*



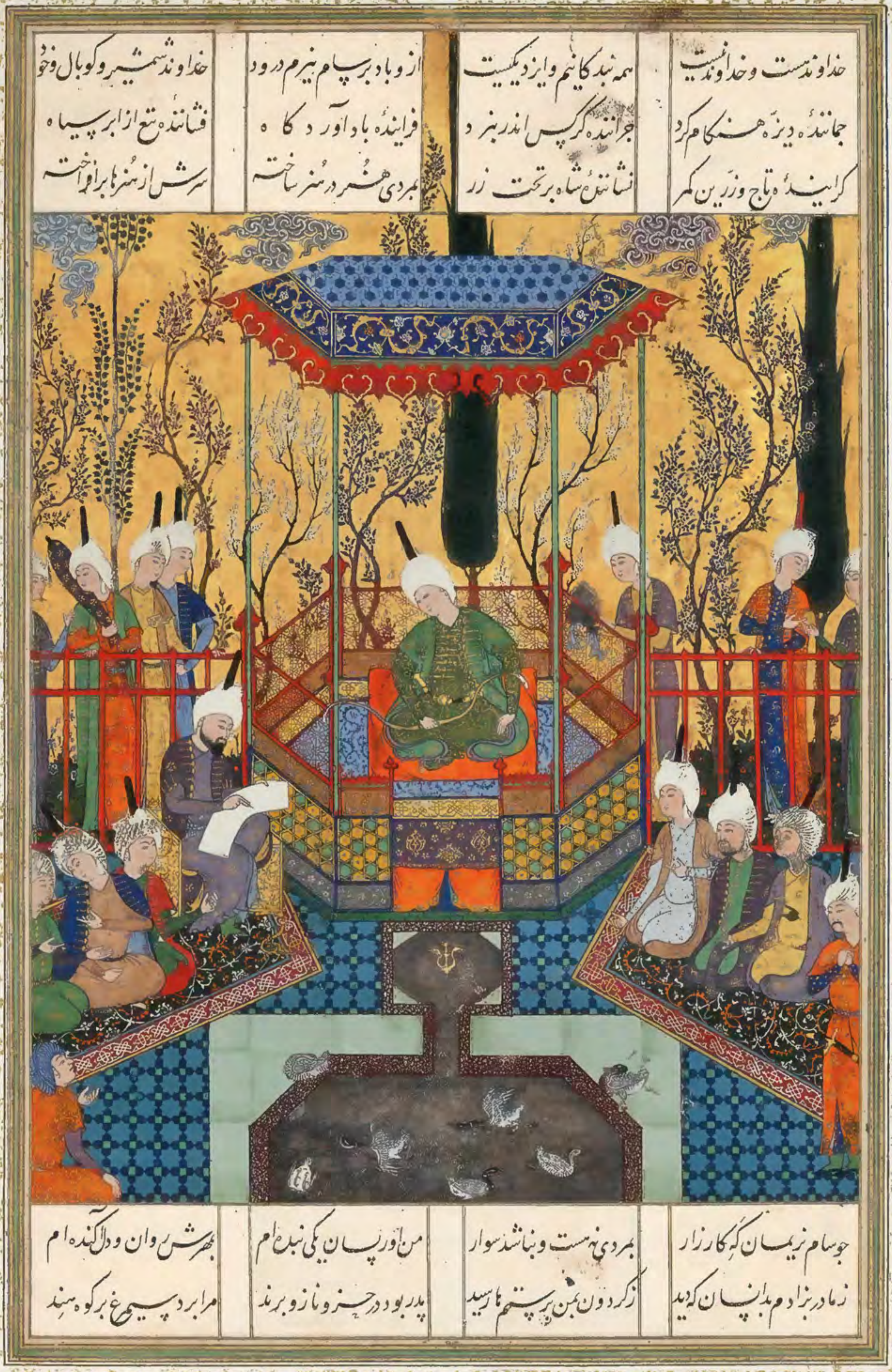
FOLIO 71V *Rudaba's Maids Return to the Palace*



FOLIO 72V *Rudaba Makes a Ladder of Her Tresses*

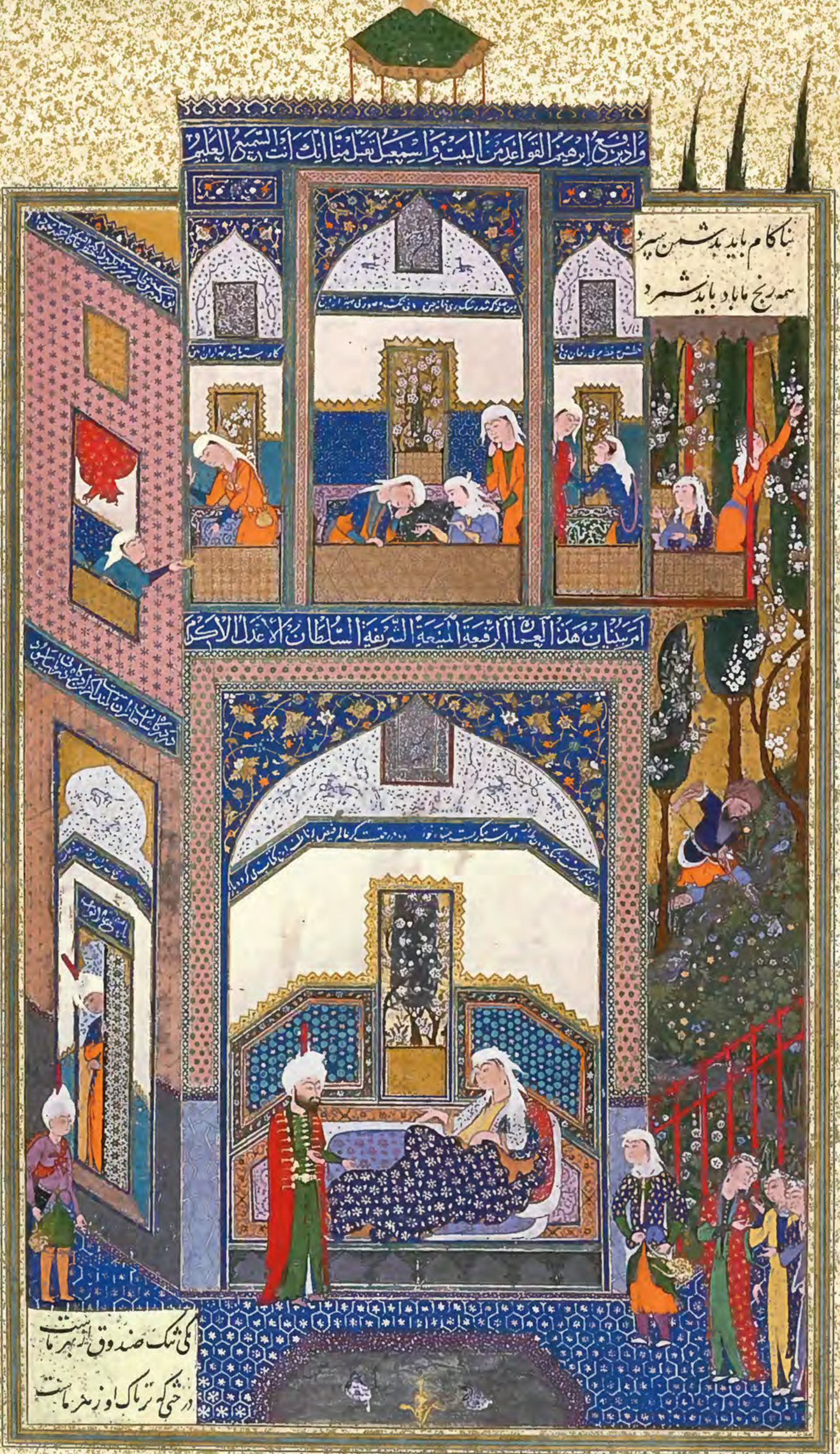


FOLIO 73V *Zal Consults the Magi*



FOLIO 74V *Zal Dictates a Letter to Sam about Rudaba*

FOLIO 76V *Rudaba Confesses to Sindukht*



FOLIO 77V *Mihrab Hears of Rudaba's Folly*

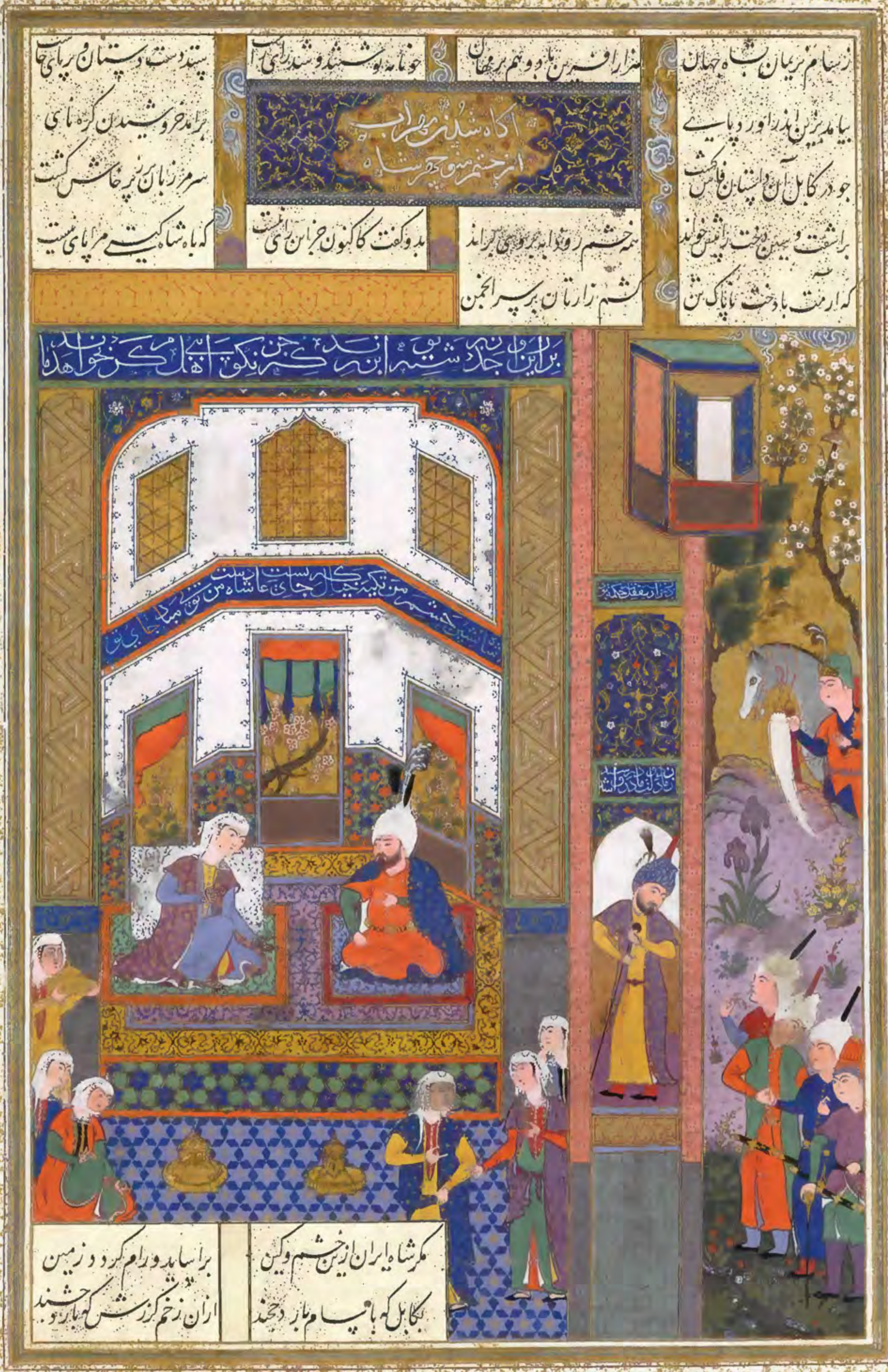
 FOLIO 78V *Rudaba before Mihrab*

FOLIO 79V *Sam Is Visited by Prince Nauzar*

 FOLIO 80V *Manuchihr Welcomes Sam but Orders War upon Mihrab*

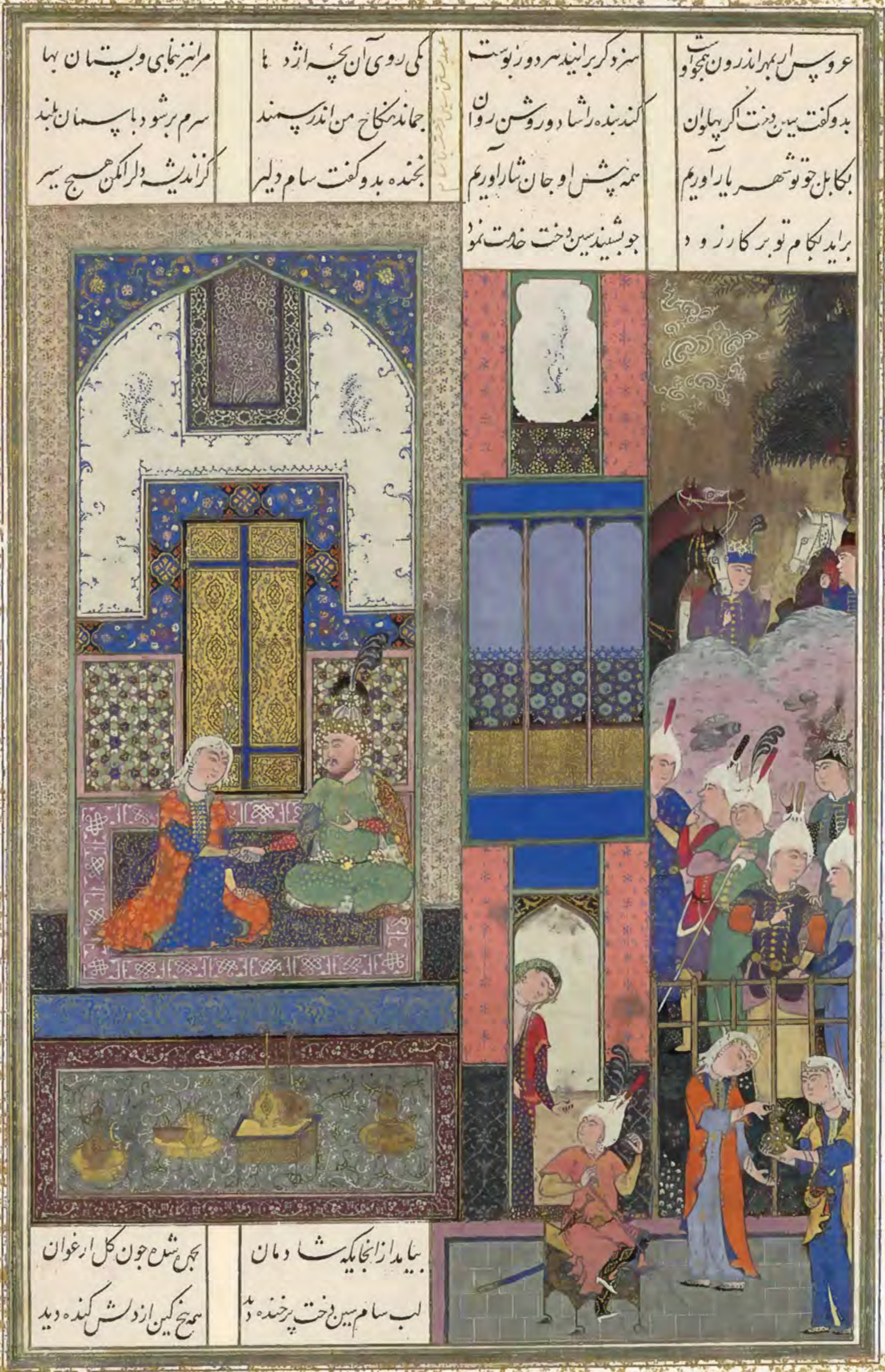
FOLIO 81V *Zal Questions Sam's Intentions Regarding the House of Mihrab*

FOLIO 82V *"One Blow" Sam Recounts How He Slew a Dragon*



FOLIO 83V *Mihrab Vents His Anger upon Sindukht*

FOLIO 84V *Sindukht Comes to Sam Bearing Gifts*



FOLIO 85V *Sam Seals His Pact with Sindukht*

FOLIO 86V *The Shah's Wise Men Approve of Zal's Marriage*

FOLIO 87V *Zal Expounds the Mysteries of the Magi*

FOLIO 89V *Sam and Zal Welcomed into Kabul*

FOLIO 92V *Rustam Slays the White Elephant*

FOLIO 96V *Shah Nauzar Embraces Sam*

FOLIO 98V *The First Clash with the Invading Turanians*

FOLIO 100R *Barman Slays Old Qubad*

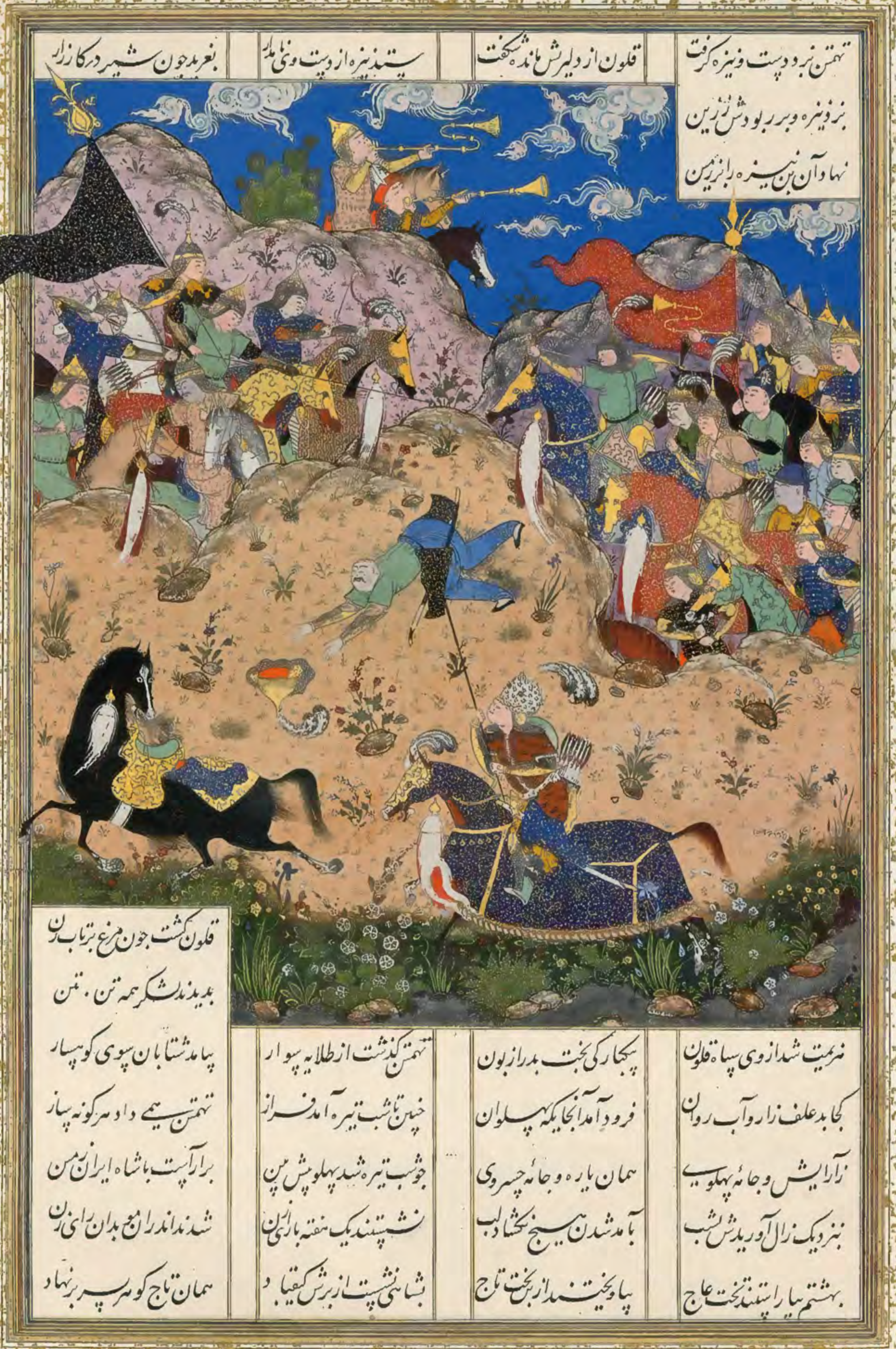
FOLIO 102V *Qaran Slays Barman*

FOLIO 104R *Zal Slays Khazarvan*

FOLIO 105R *Afrasiyab on the Iranian Throne*

FOLIO 109R *Rustam Lassoes Rakhsh*

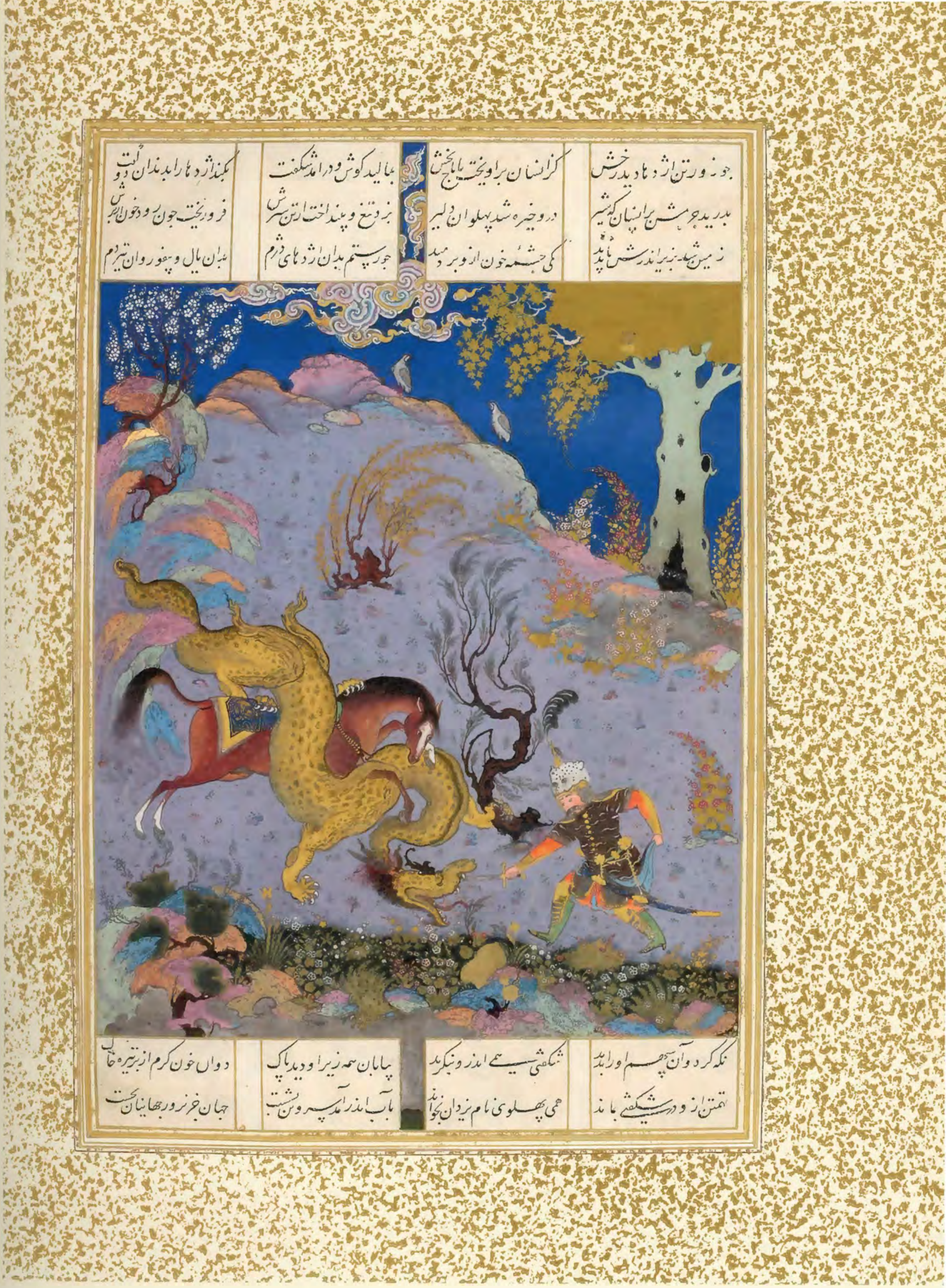
FOLIO 110V *Rustam Finds Kay Qubad*



FOLIO 111V *Rustam Spits Qalun on His Own Spear*

FOLIO 112V *Rustam's First Encounter with Afrasiyab*

FOLIO 118R *Rustam's First Course: Rakhsh Slays a Lion*



FOLIO 119V *Rustam's Third Course: He Slays a Dragon*

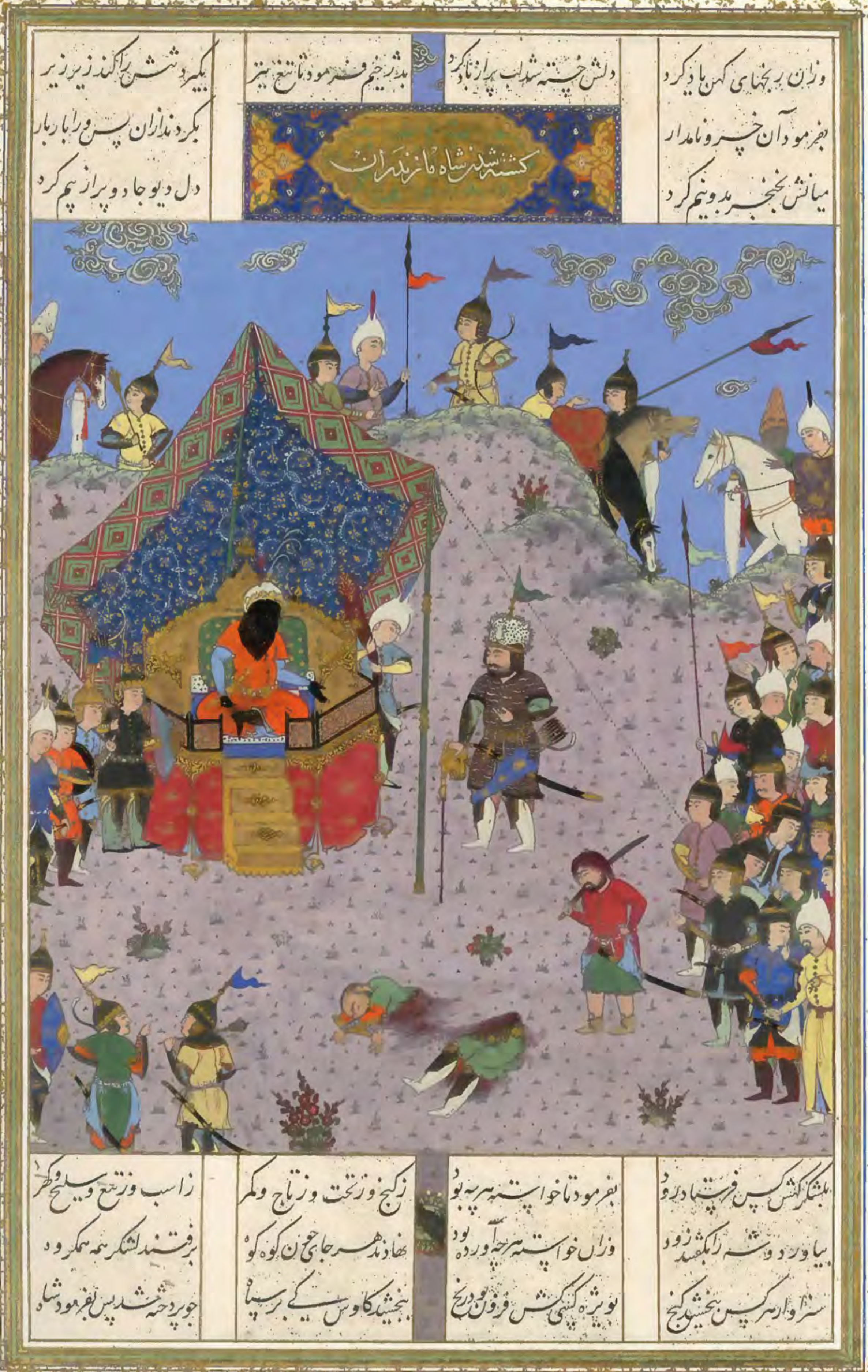
 FOLIO 120V *Rustam's Fourth Course: He Cleaves a Witch*

FOLIO 121V *Rustam's Fifth Course: The Capture of Aulad*

 FOLIO 122V *Rustam's Sixth Course: He Slays Arzhang*

FOLIO 123R *Kay Kavus and Rustam Embrace*

FOLIO 124R *Rustam's Seventh Course: He Kills the White Div*



FOLIO 127V *Rustam Brings the Div King to Kay Kavus for Execution*

FOLIO 130R *The Marriage of Sudaba and Kay Kavus*

FOLIO 134R *Kay Kavus Ascends to the Sky*

FOLIO 135V *Rustam and the Seven Champions of Iran Hunt in Turan*

ز قلب سپه گیو چون بنگرید
جهان پیش چشم یلان تیره دید
بیامد بیاری بر سرپه یار
برآویخت با پیلسم هر چهار
بیاری بیامد برش تازیان
خروشان و جوشان و تیغ زنان
که با نامداری بگردار شیر
بکوشید هر چار مرد دلیر
وزین روی رستم بگردار شیر
بیامد بغرّید گرز و دلیر
بغرّید چون رعد در کوهسار
و یا شیر جنگی گه کارزار
چو پیران ز قلب سپه بنگرید
برادر بدانجای پیچان دید
چنین گفت با گیو کای نامدار
شما را هنر نیست در کارزار
بگفت و بر ایشان یکی حمله کرد
که بر چرخ گردان برآورد گرد
بکشتند چندان ز توران سپاه
که پیدا نبد دشت و دریا و راه

FOLIO 141R *Suhrab Ropes in His Steed*

FOLIO 143R *Suhrab Meets Gurdafarid*

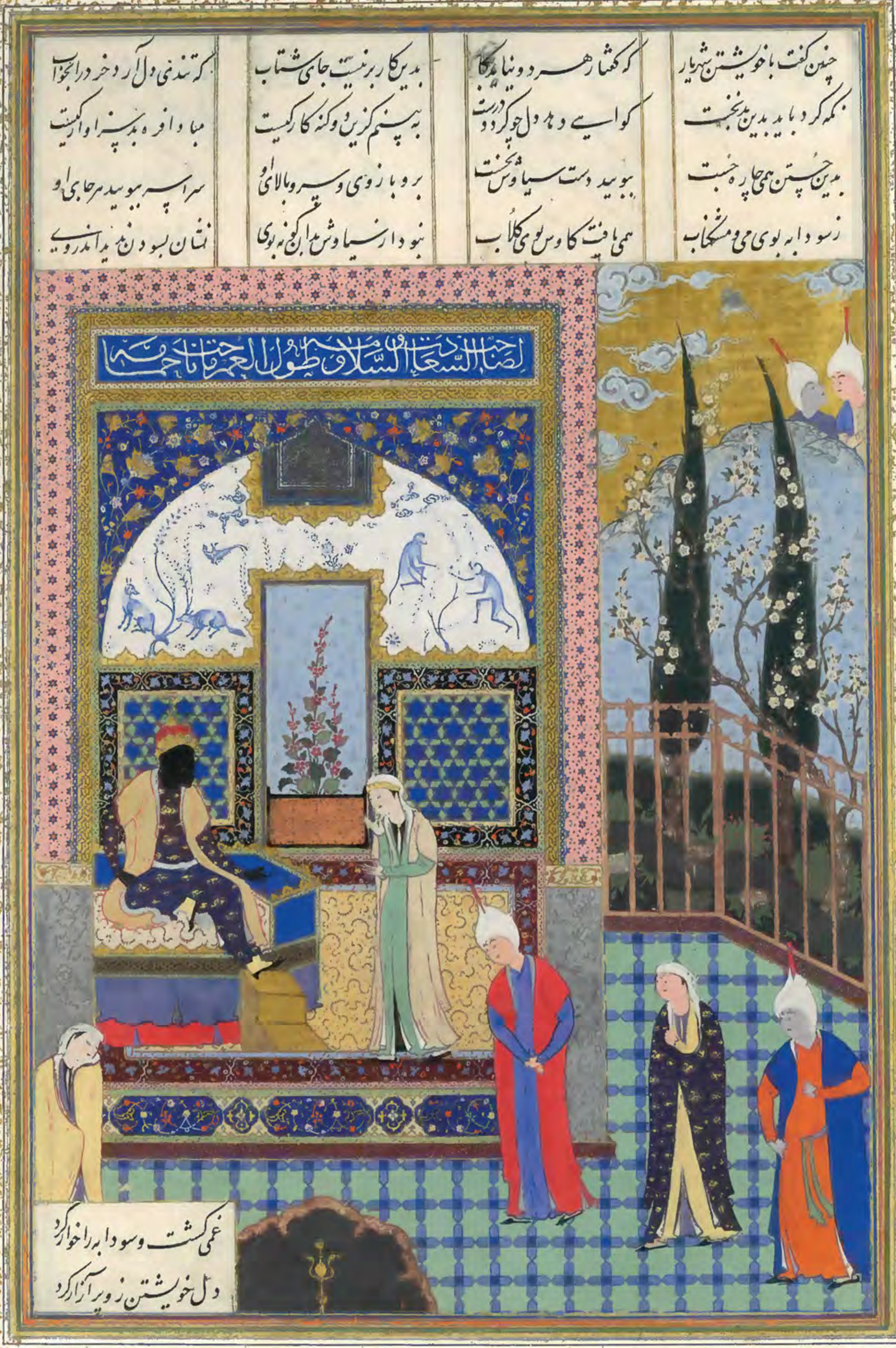
FOLIO 146R *Rustam Pained before Kay Kavus*

FOLIO 151V *Rustam and Suhrab in Battle: The First Day*

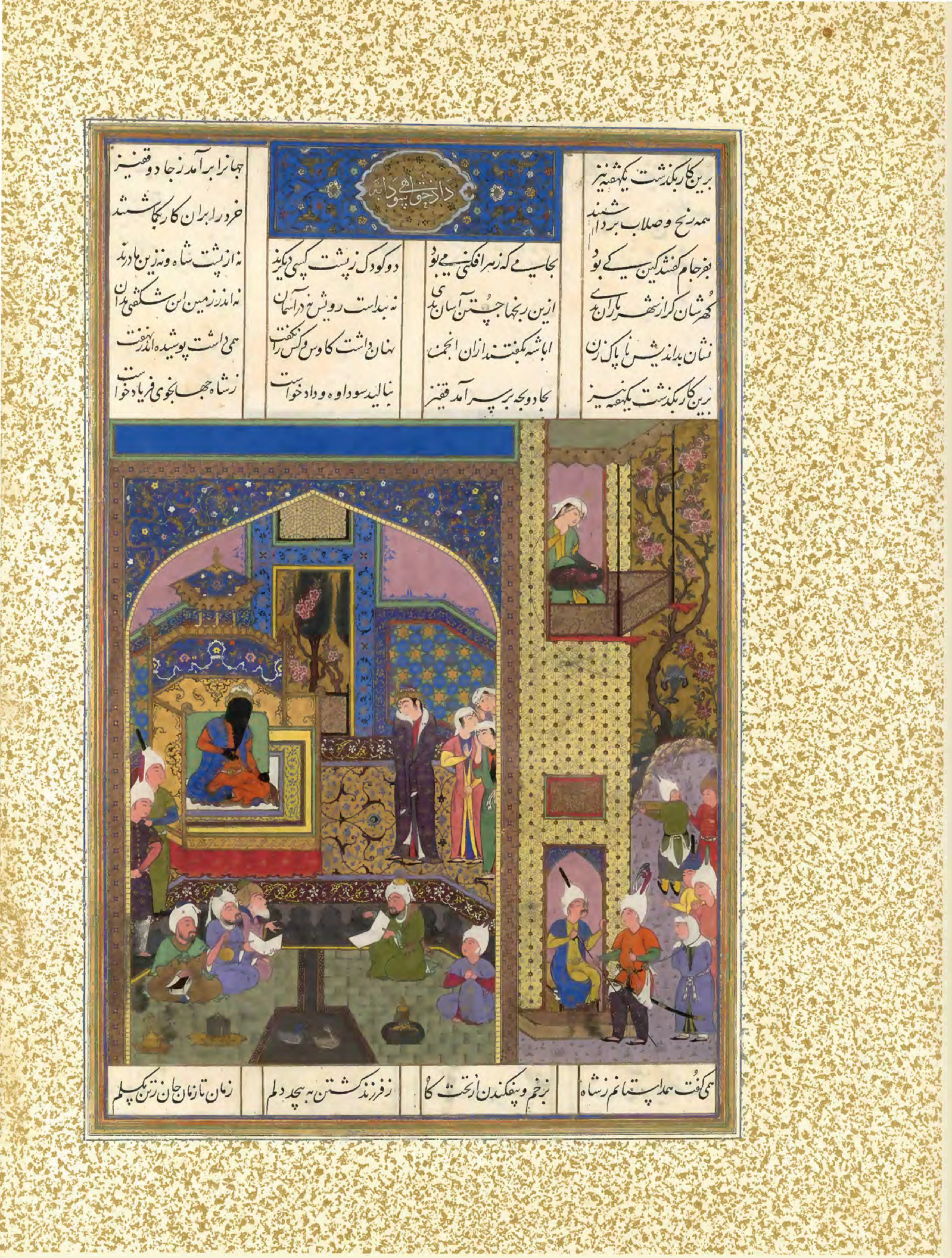
FOLIO 153V *Suhrab Gains the Upper Hand: The Second Day*

FOLIO 155R *Rustam Weeps over His Dying Son: The Third Day*

 FOLIO 156V *Lamentation for Suhrab*



FOLIO 163V *Siyavush Stands Accused by Sudaba before Kay Kavus*

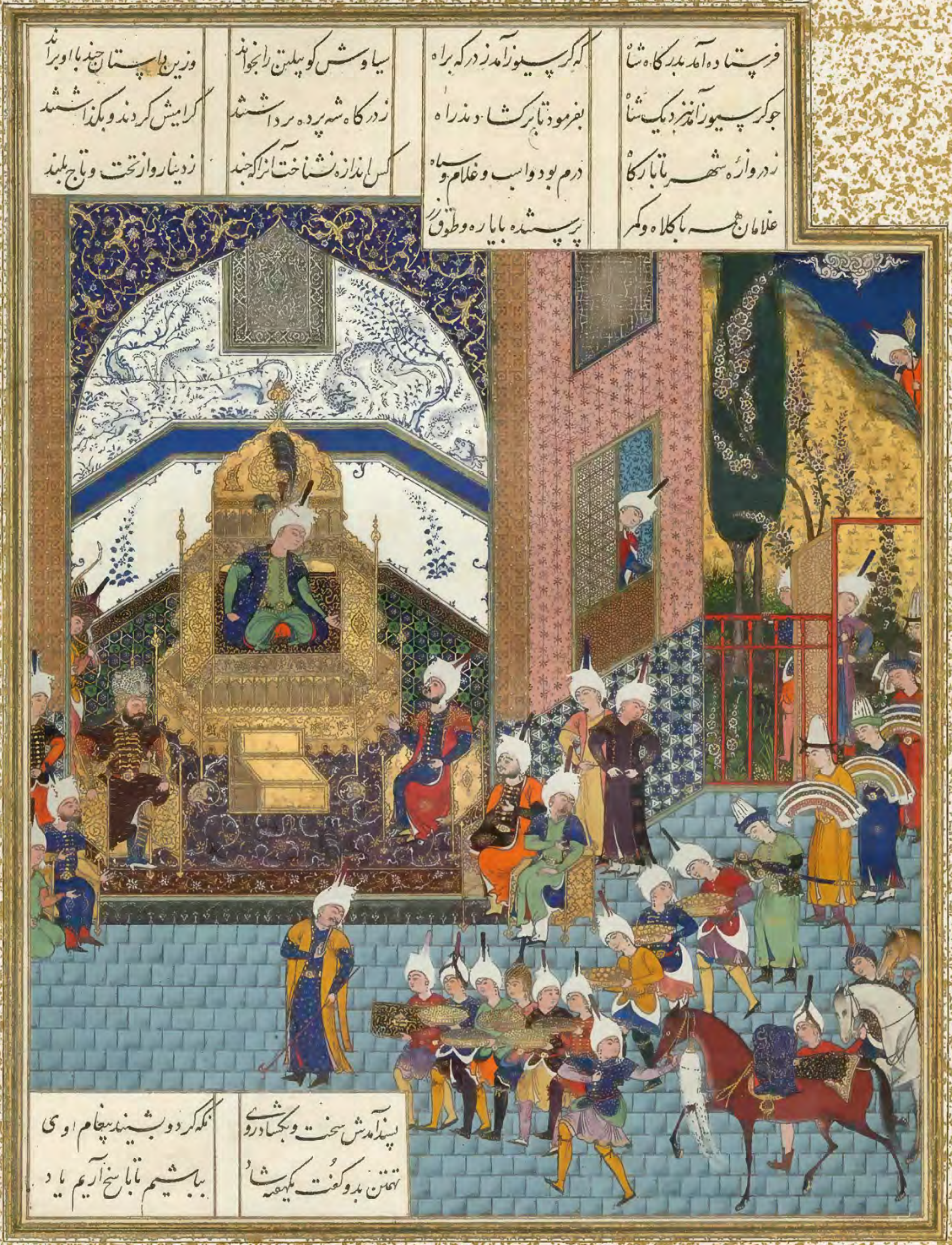


 FOLIO 164V *Sudaba's Second Accusation against Siyavush Is Judged*

بنیروی یزدان نیکی دهش
ازین کوه آتش نیابم تپش
سیاوش سیه را بتندی بتاخت
نشد تنگ دل پیش آتش بساخت
خروشی برآمد ز دشت و ز شهر
غم آمد جهان را ازان کار بهر
ازان روی دیگر برون رفت شاه
که مویی نشد بر تن او تباه
چو از دست سودابه آوا شنید
برآمد بایوان و آتش بدید
همی خواست کورا بد آید بروی
همی گشت خوبان پر از گفت و گوی

FOLIO 168V *Siyavush and Rustam Capture Balkh*

FOLIO 170V *Afrasiyab Announces the New Policy of Peace with Iran*

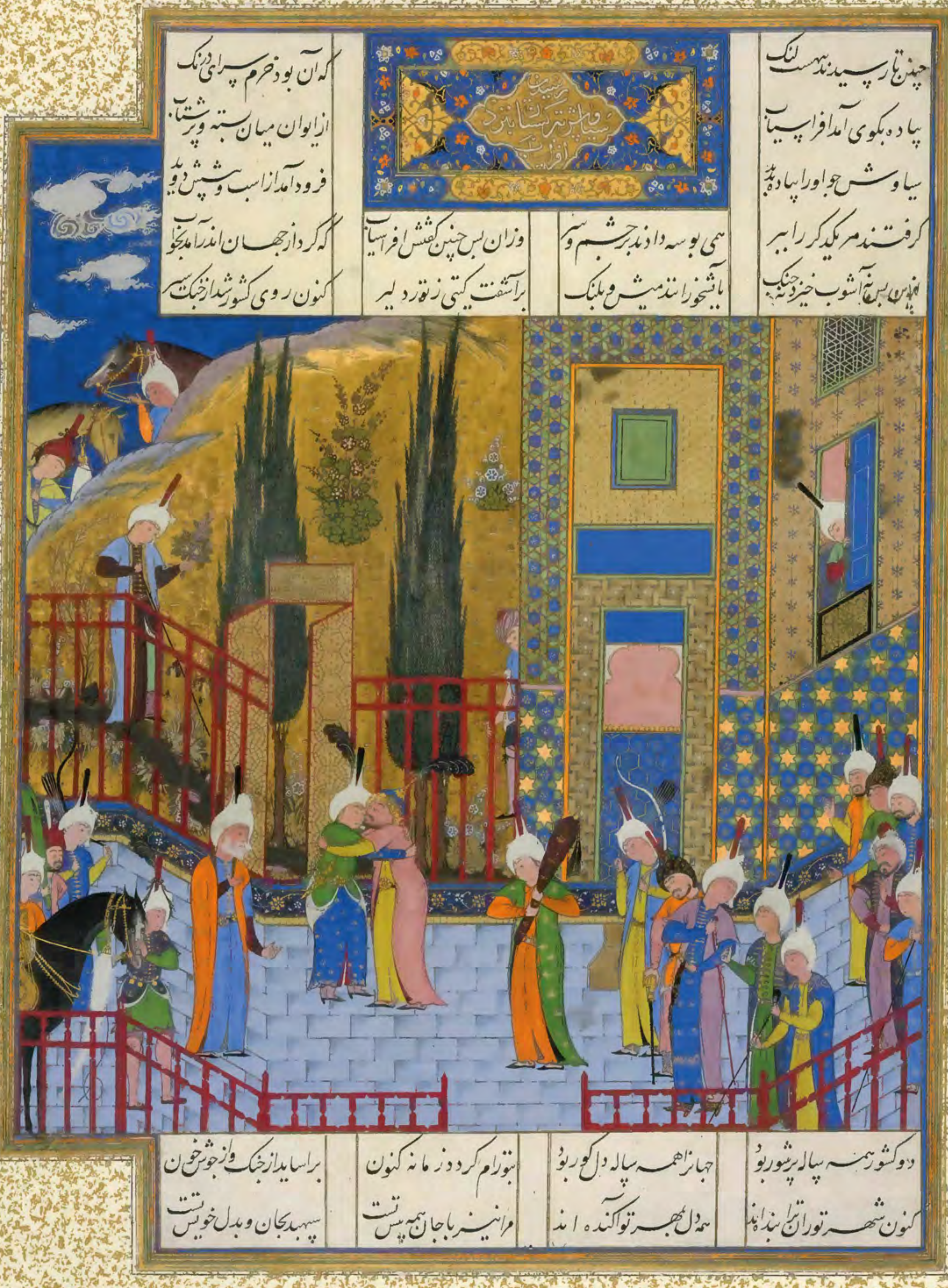


FOLIO 171V *Siyavush Receives Gifts from Afrasiyab's Peace Envoy*

FOLIO 174R *Kay Kavus Upbraids Siyavush in a Letter*

FOLIO 175V *Siyavush Takes Counsel with Zanga and Bahram*

FOLIO 178R *Piran Respectfully Welcomes Siyavush to Turan*



FOLIO 179R *Afrasiyab and Siyavush Embrace*

FOLIO 180V *Siyavush Plays Polo before Afrasiyab*

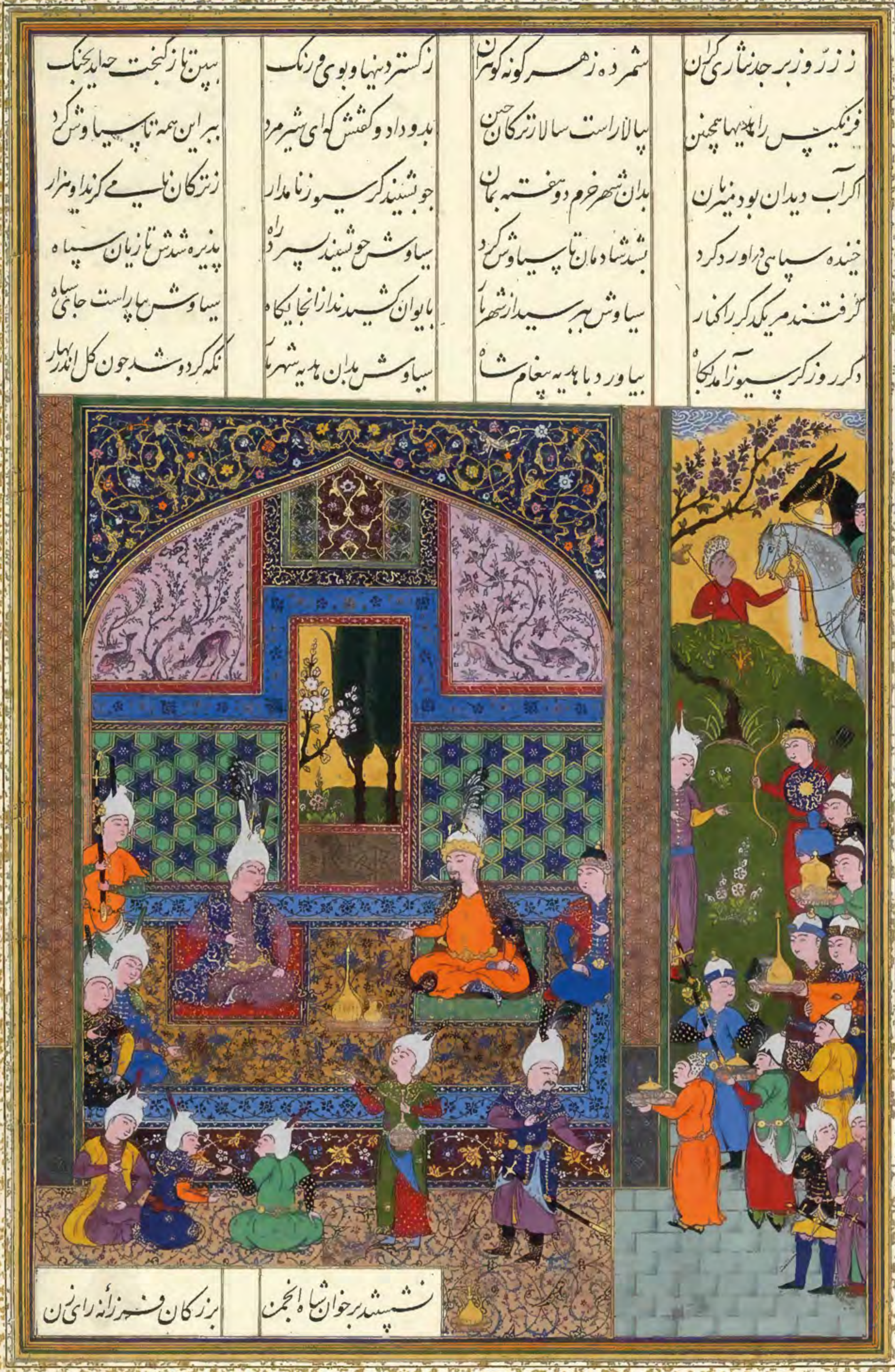
FOLIO 181V *Siyavush Hits the Mark*

FOLIO 182V *Siyavush and Afrasiyab in the Hunting Field*

FOLIO 183V *Siyavush and Jarira Wedded*

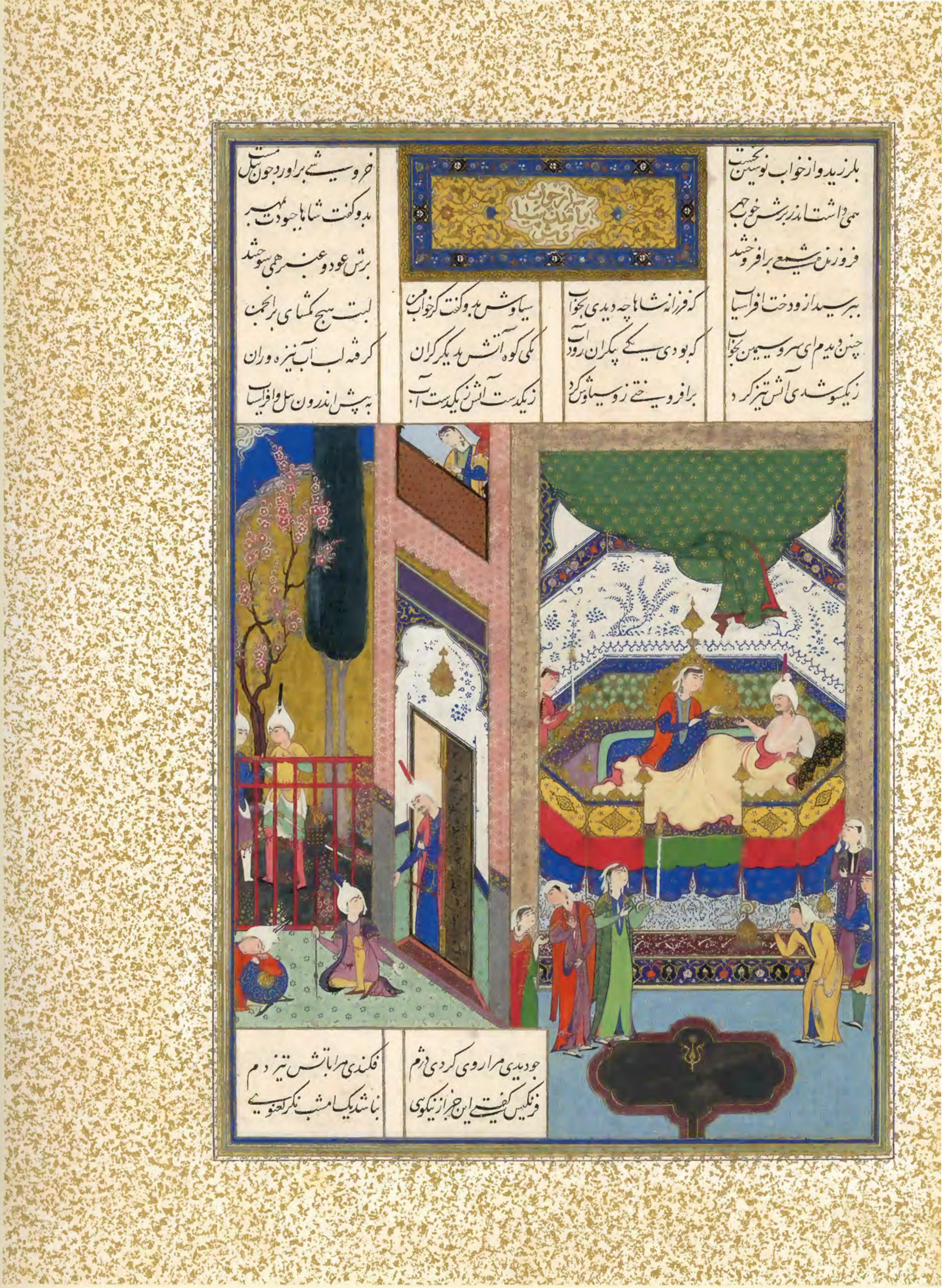
FOLIO 185V *Siyavush and Farangis Wedded*

FOLIO 188V *Piran Visits Siyavushgird*



FOLIO 189V *Garsivaz Visits Siyavushgird*

FOLIO 190V *The Prowess of Siyavush Vexes Garsivaz*



FOLIO 195R *Siyavush Recounts His Nightmare to Farangis*

 FOLIO 198R *The Murder of Siyavush*

FOLIO 201R *Piran and Kay Khusrau before Afrasiyab*

 FOLIO 202V *Rustam Blames Kay Kavus for the Slaying of Siyavush*

گرفتار شدن سرخه بر دست فرامرز
کمربند بگرفت و از پشت زین
برآورد و زد ناگهان بر زمین
پیاده به پیش اندر افکند خوار
بلشکرگه آورد ازان کارزار
درفش تهمتن همانگه ز راه
پدید آمد و بانگ کرد سپاه
فرامرز پیش پدر شد چو گرد
به پیروزی از روز کار نبرد
به پیش اندرون سرخه را بسته دست
بریده ورا زار در یال و دست
همه روی هامون پر از کشته بود
سر دشمن از جنگ برگشته بود
سپاه آفرین خواند بر پهلوان
بر آن نامبردار پور جوان
تهمتن برو آفرین کرد نیز
بروتش ببخشید بسیار چیز
یکی داستان زد بر و پیلتن
که هر کس که سر برکشد ز انجمن
هنر باید و گوهر نامدار
خردیار و فرهنگ آموزگار
چو این چار گوهر بکار آورد
دلاور شود کارزار آورد

FOLIO 206V *Human Diverts Rustam from Afrasiyab*

FOLIO 210V *Kay Khusrau Is Discovered by Giv*

FOLIO 212R *Kay Khusrau Rides Bihzad for the First Time*

FOLIO 214V *Piran, Captured by Giv, Is Freed by Kay Khusrau*

FOLIO 216V *Kay Khusrau Crosses the River Jaihun with Giv and Farangis*

FOLIO 218R *Kay Khusrau Welcomed by Kay Kavus*

FOLIO 223R *Kay Khusrau Celebrates His Accession*

FOLIO 226V *Kay Khusrau Launches the War upon Turan*

FOLIO 229V *Farud Confronts the Iranians*

FOLIO 232V *Farud Humiliates the Iranians*

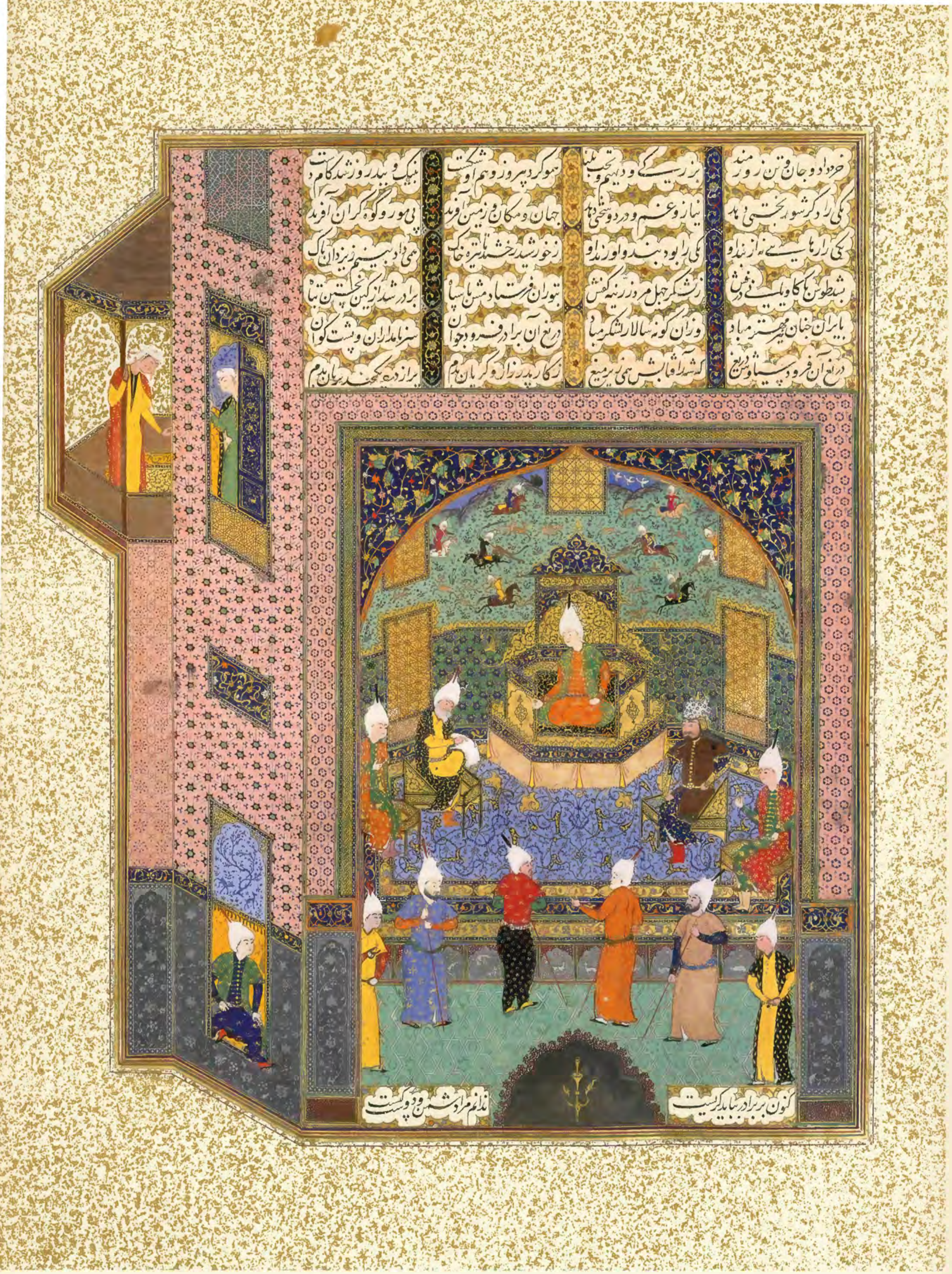
FOLIO 234R *Bizhan Forces Farud to Flee*

FOLIO 236R *The Iranians Mourn Farud and Jarira*

FOLIO 238R *Giv Burns Down the Barricade on the River Kasa*

 FOLIO 239V *Bizhan Takes Tazhav's Crown and Concubine*

FOLIO 241R *The Besotted Iranian Camp Attacked by Night*



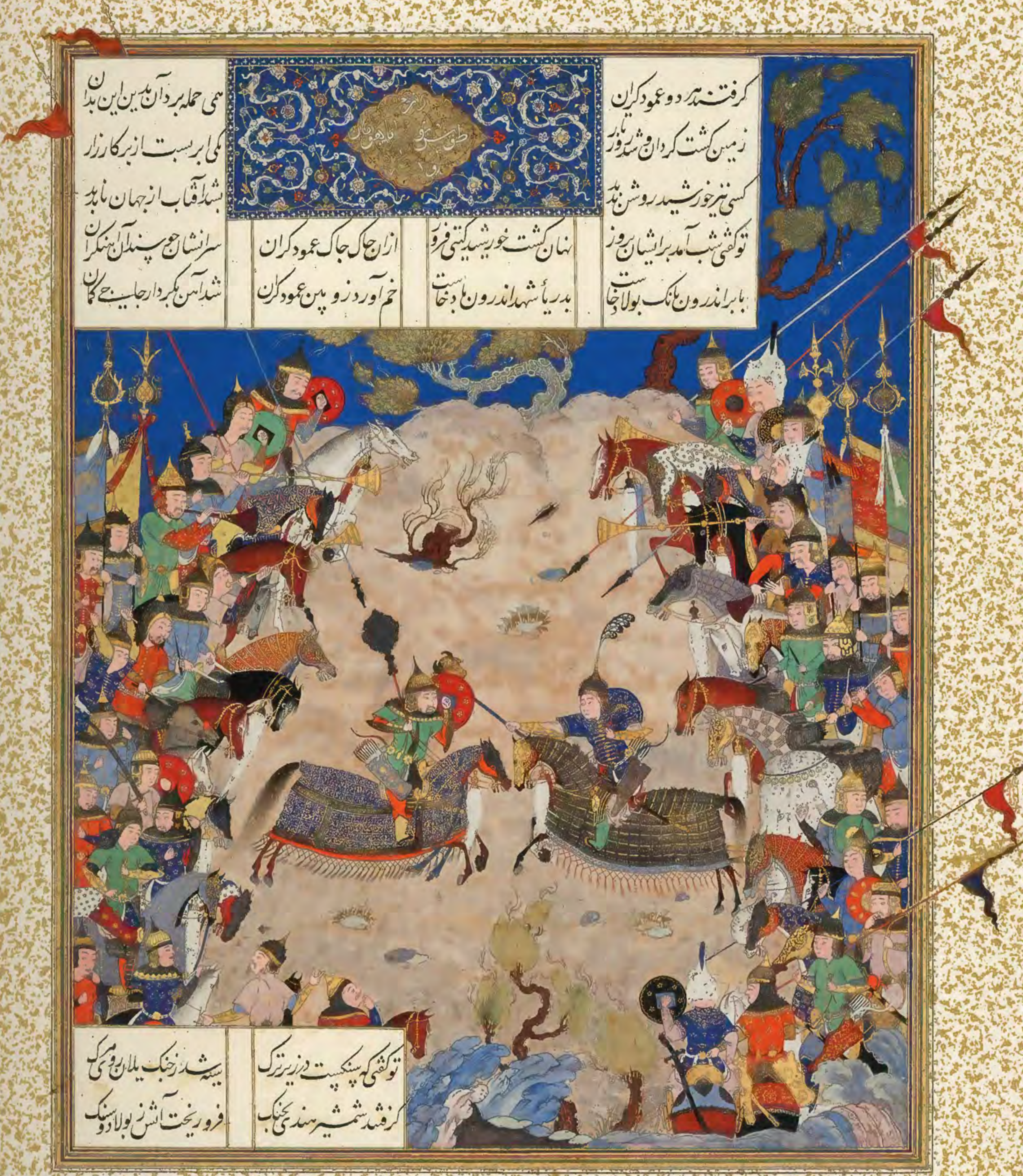
 FOLIO 242R *Kay Khusrau Orders Tus Recalled*

FOLIO 243V *The Battle of Pashan Begins*

FOLIO 245R *Bahram Recovers the Crown of Rivniz*

FOLIO 248R *Giv Avenges Bahram by Slaying Tazhav*

FOLIO 251R *The Confrontation of Tus and Piran across the River Shahd*



FOLIO 252V *The Combat of Tus and Human*

 FOLIO 254V *Ruhham Stops the Hand of the Weather Shaman*

FOLIO 257V *The Iranians on Mount Hamavan Attack by Night*

FOLIO 259V *Tus's Vision of Siyavush*

FOLIO 261R *Piran Meets the Khaqan of Chin*

FOLIO 263R *The Khaqan and Kamus Observe the Iranians*

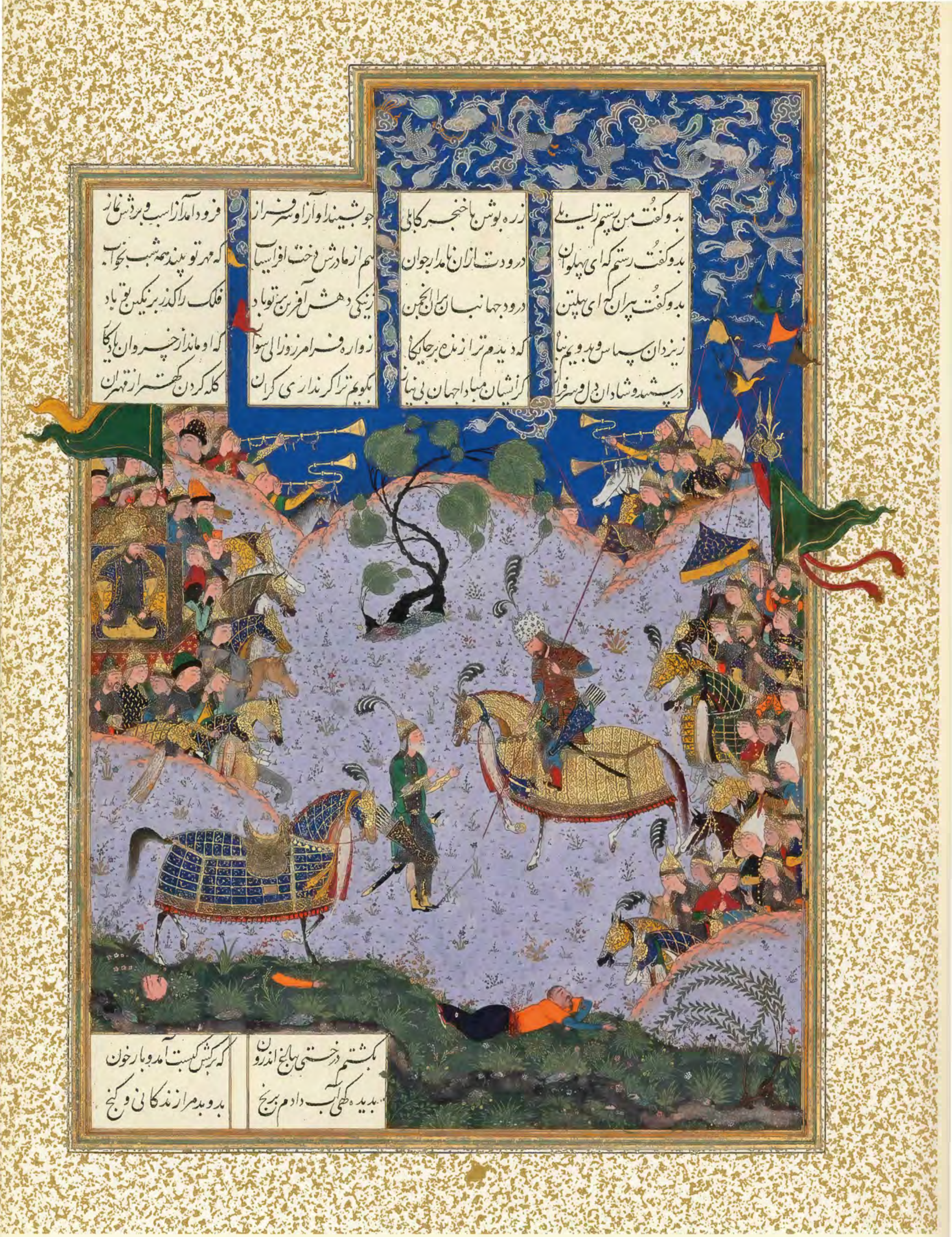
FOLIO 265V *The Combat of Giv and Kamus*

FOLIO 266V *Rustam Expounds on Fate and Death*

FOLIO 268V *The Combat of Rustam and Ashkabus*

 FOLIO 271R *The Combat of Rustam and Kamus*

FOLIO 272V *The Combat of Rustam and Chingish*



 FOLIO 274V *Piran Hears Rustam's Terms for Peace*

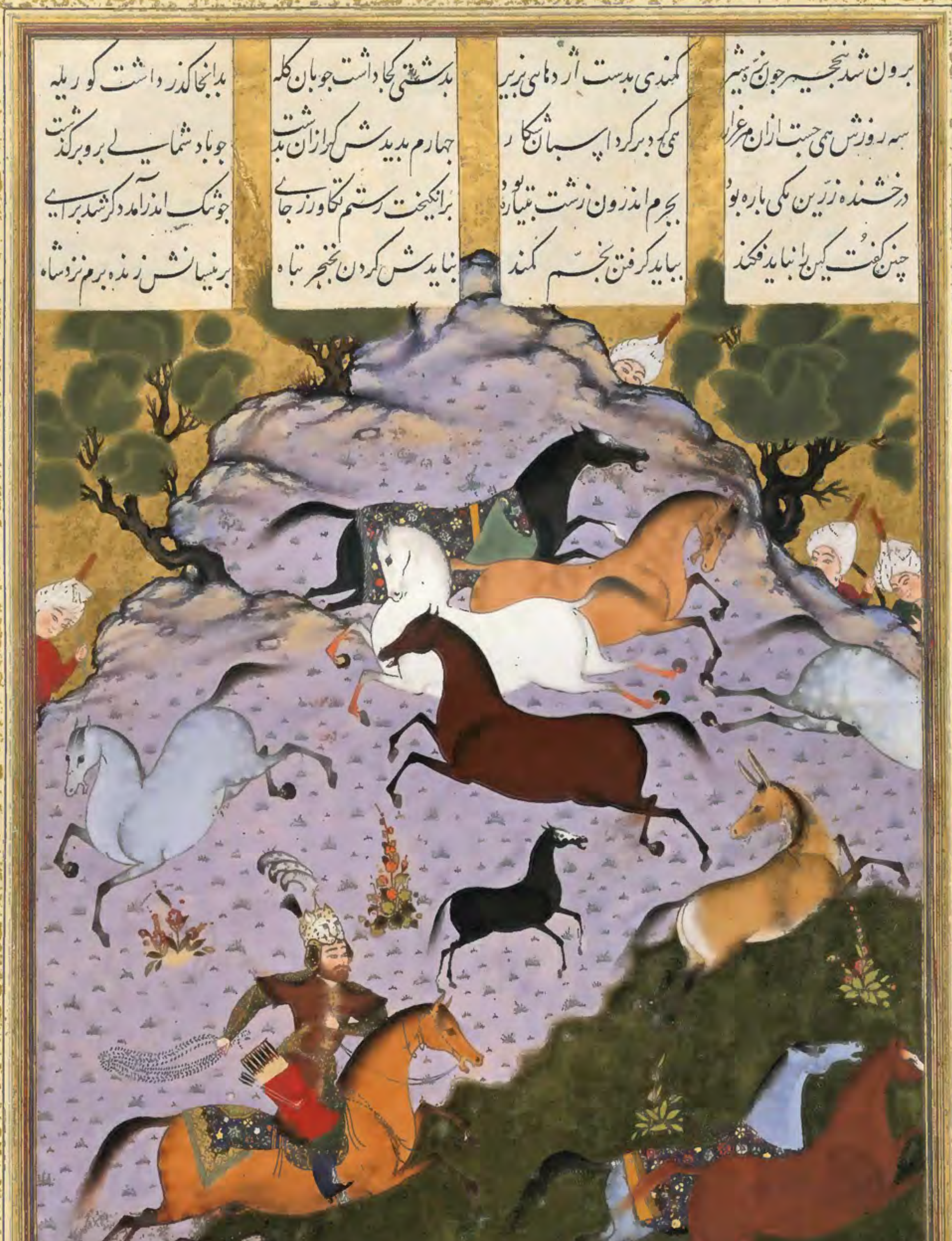
FOLIO 276V *Shangul Stirs the Khaqan's Council to War on Rustam*

FOLIO 279V *The Combat of Rustam and Shangul*

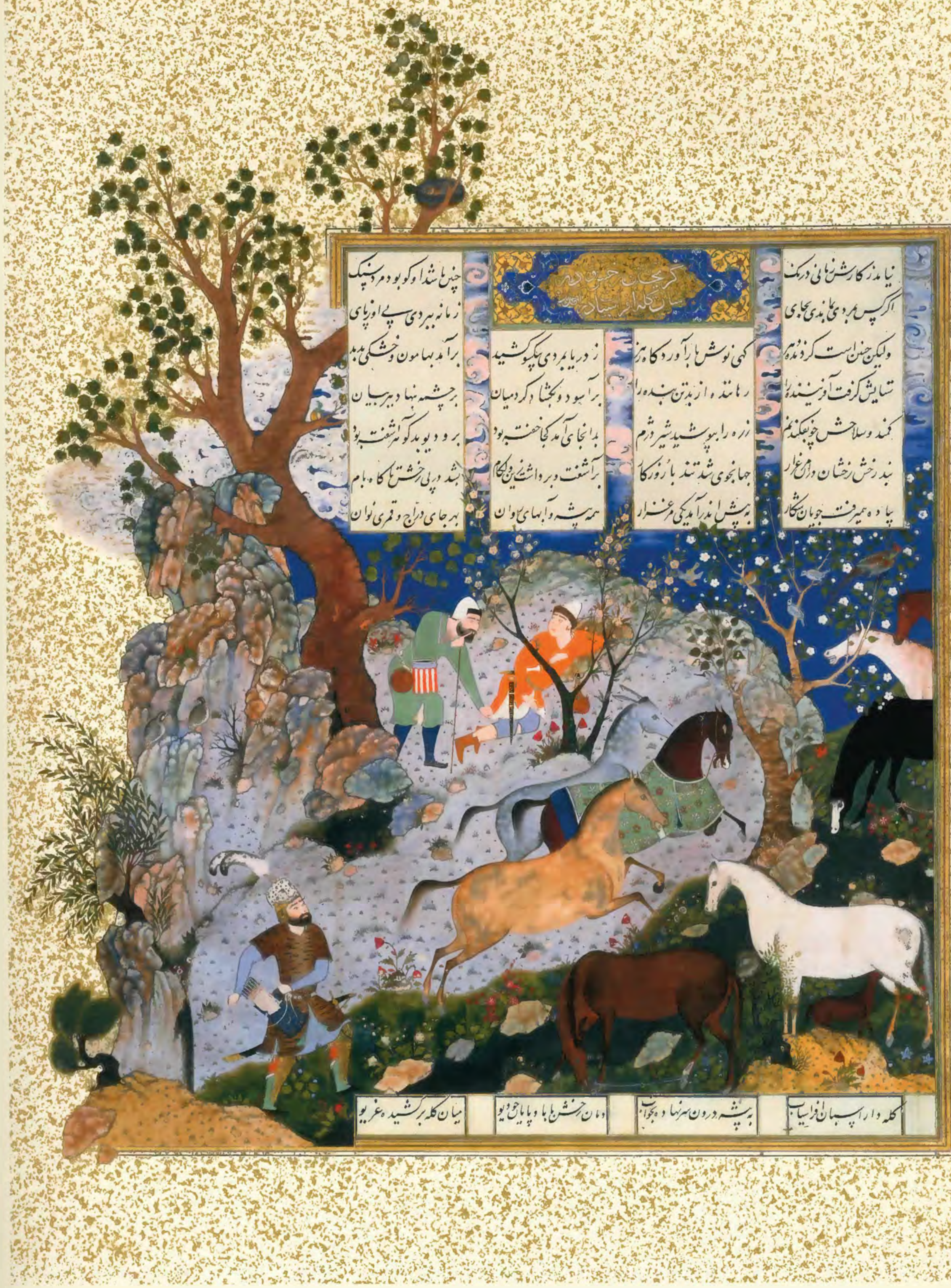
FOLIO 281R *The Combat of Rustam and Gahar*

FOLIO 286V *Rustam Reduces the Fortress of the Cannibal Nation*

FOLIO 291R *The Combat of Rustam and Puladvand*



FOLIO 294R *Rustam Pursues Akvan*



FOLIO 295R *Rustam Recovers Rakhsh from Afrasiyab's Herd*

FOLIO 299R *Bizhan Slaughters the Wild Boars of Irman*

FOLIO 300V *Bizhan Receives an Invitation through Manizha's Nurse*

FOLIO 308V *Kay Khusrau Fetes Rustam beneath the Jewel Tree*

FOLIO 326V *Bizhan Slays Human in Single Combat*

 FOLIO 328R *Bizhan Slays Nastihan and Stems the Turanian Night Raid*

FOLIO 336V *Farshidvard Engaged by Bizhan and Guraza*

FOLIO 339R *Planning for the Joust of the Twelve Rooks*

FOLIO 341V *The First "Joust of the Rooks": Fariburz versus Kalbad*

FOLIO 342R *The Fourth "Joust of the Rooks": Faruhil versus Zangula*

FOLIO 342V *The Fifth "Joust of the Rooks": Ruhham versus Barman*

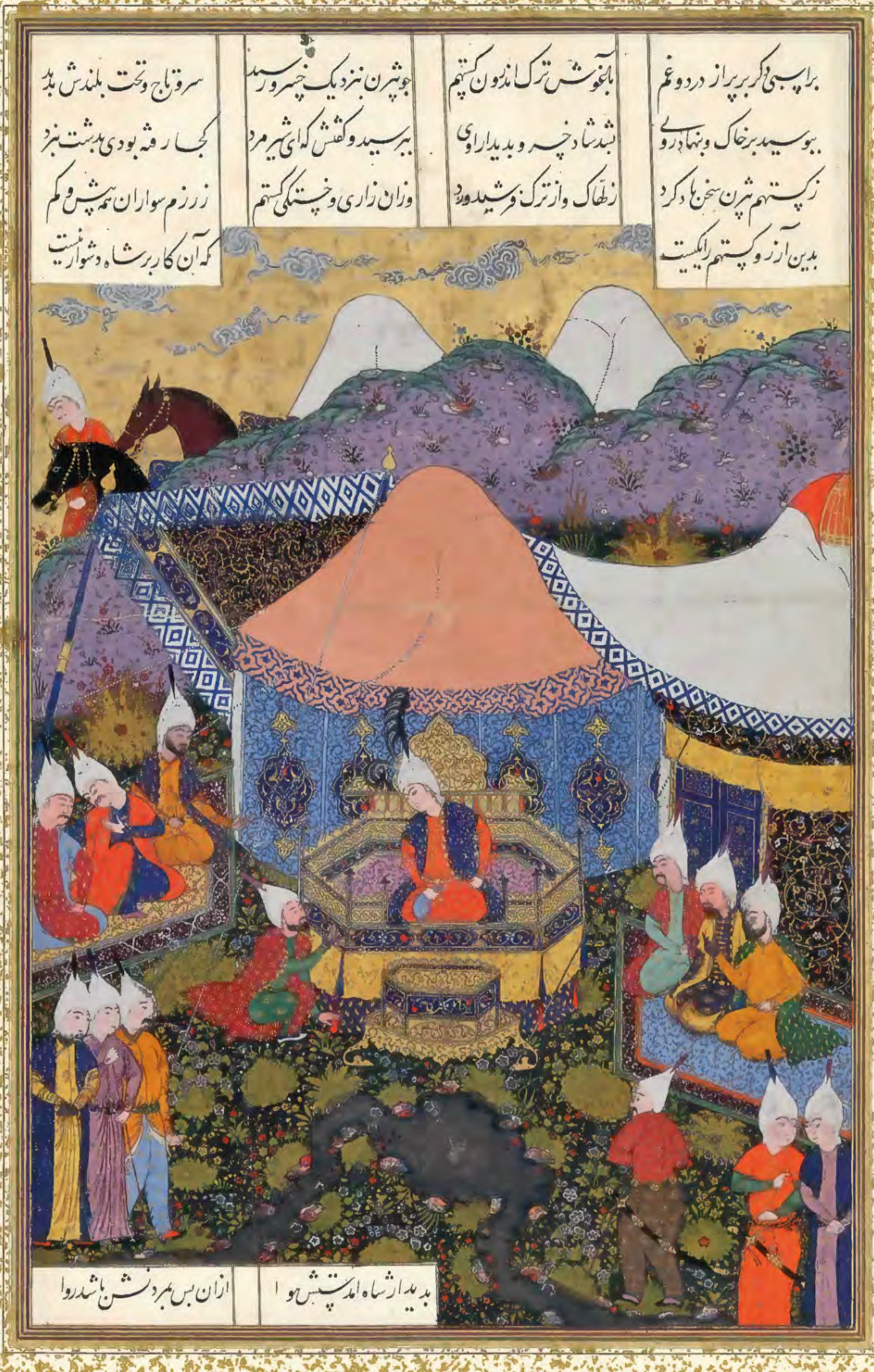
FOLIO 343R *The Sixth "Joust of the Rooks": Bizhan versus Ruyin*

FOLIO 343V *The Seventh "Joust of the Rooks": Hajir versus Sipahram*

FOLIO 345R *The Tenth "Joust of the Rooks": Barta versus Kuhram*

FOLIO 346R *The Final "Joust of the Rooks": Gudarz versus Piran*

FOLIO 349V *Gustaham Slays Lahhak and Farshidvard*



FOLIO 352R *Kay Khusrau Receives the Turanian Surrender Emissary*

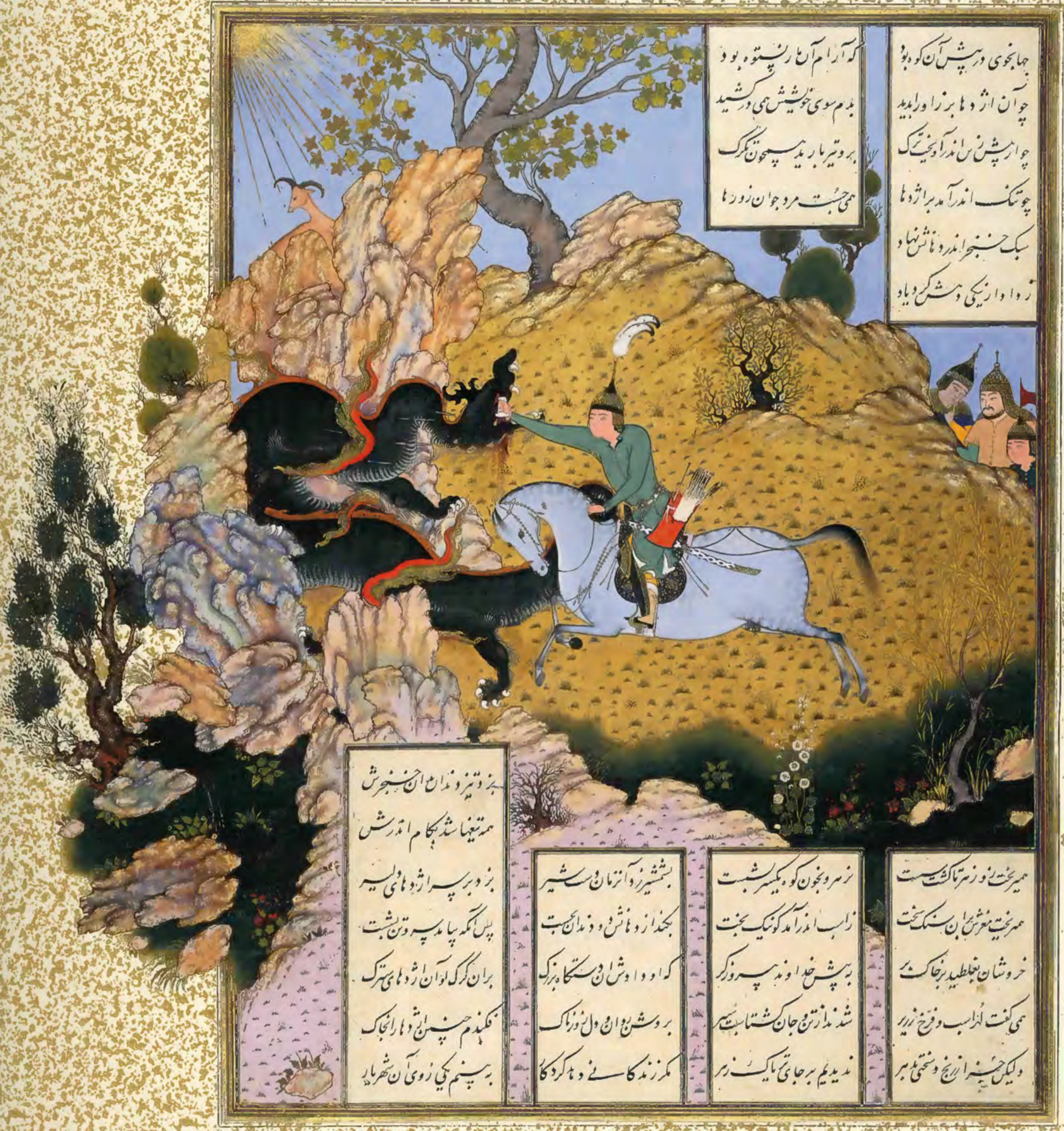
FOLIO 360V *Kay Khusrau Slays Shida in Single Combat*

FOLIO 367V *The Night Battle of Kay Khusrau and Afrasiyab*

 FOLIO 376V *Kay Khusrau Defeats the Army of Mukran*

FOLIO 383V *Kay Khusrau Slays Afrasiyab in the Name of Siyavush*

FOLIO 385V *Jahn Installed on the Throne of Turan*

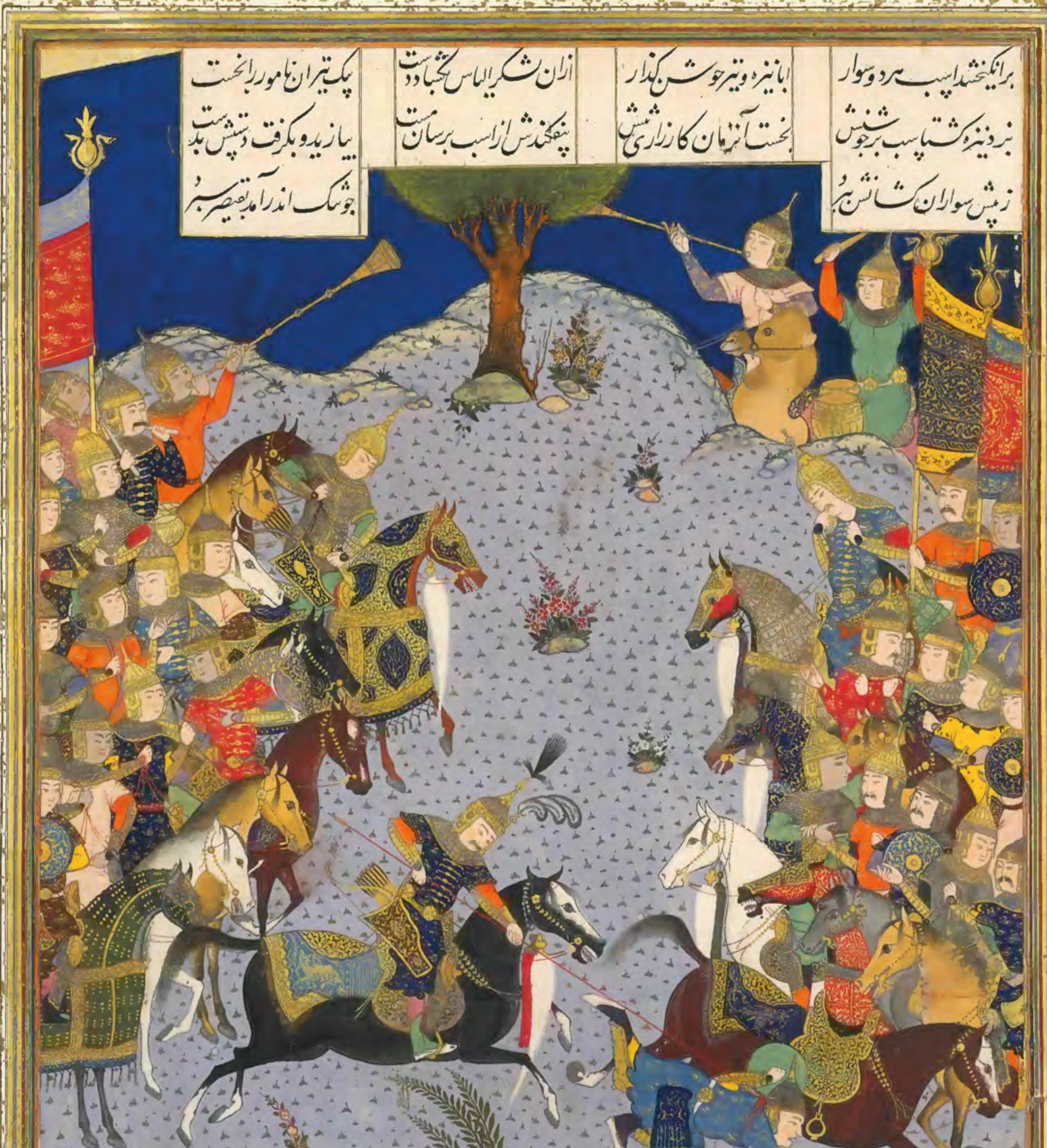


FOLIO 402R *Gushtasp Slays the Dragon of Mount Saqila*

FOLIO 403V *Gushtasp Proves His Polo before Caesar*

جوان دید با خویش گشتاسب گفت
نگه کرد قیصر بدان سرفراز
سرافراز گردان بسی دیده‌ام
بخوانید تا زو بپرسیم که کیست
بدان خنگ و یال و رکیب دراز
بیفکند چوگان کمان برگرفت
بپرسید و گفت این سوار از کجاست
همه روم ازو دست بر سر گرفت
که چندین بپیچد ازو چپ و راست
سواری بدین گونه نشنیده‌ام
سروش است یا همچو ما آدمیست
کجا باشدش بوم و آرامگاه
بخوانند گشتاسب را پیش اوی
چه گوید چو پرسند ازو نام جای
بپیچید جان بداندیش اوی

 FOLIO 405V *Gushtasp Leads Caesar's Army against the Khazars*



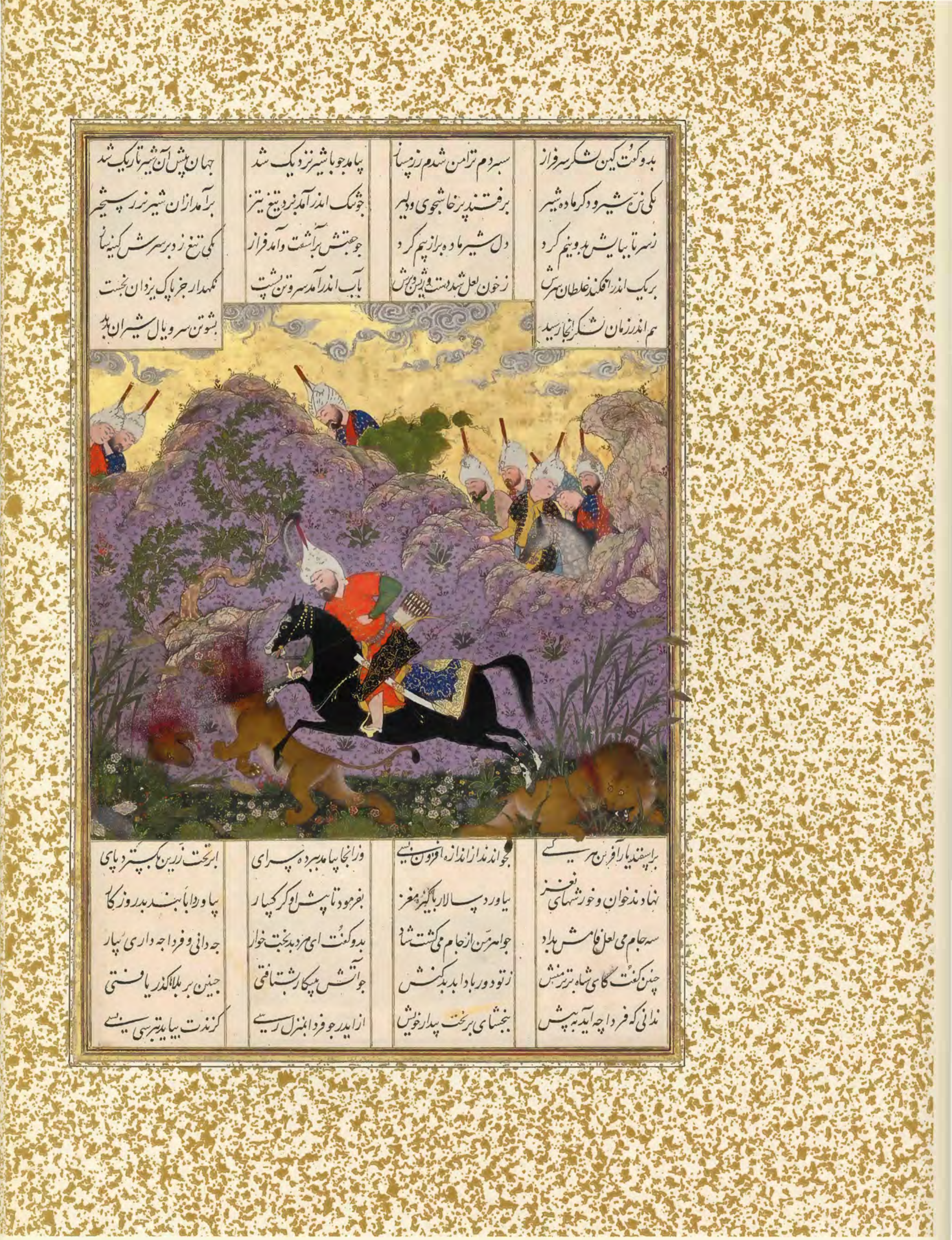
برانگیختند اسپ مرد و سوار
بر آن نیزه گشتاسپ بر جوشنش
ز پیش سواران کشانش ببرد
ابا نیزه و تیر جوشن گذار
نخست آن زمان کارزاریش
ازان لشکر الیاس بگشاد دست
بیفکندش از اسب بر سان مست
بیک تیر نامور را نخست
بیازید و بگرفت دستش بدست
چو سنگ اندر آمد بقیصر سپرد
جو الیاس را برد جایی نهان
سرآورد بر وی بزودی جهان

FOLIO 413R *Jamasp Envisions the Disaster Awaiting Gushtasp*

FOLIO 422R *Jamasp Arrives before Isfandiyar*

FOLIO 430R *Isfandiyar Captures Gurgsar in Combat*

همی راند تا شد بنزدیک گرگ
کمان را بزه کرد مرد دلیر
ز پیکان پولاد گشتند سست
یکی تیغ زهراب گون بر کشید
سراسر بشمشیرشان چاک کرد
چه گرگ آن سرافراز پیلی سترگ
بغرید برسان غرنده شیر
نیامد یکی پیش او تن درست
ز هامون سوی او نهادند روی
برآمد ز مینا یکی تیر باران گرفت
نگه کرد روشن دل اسفندیار
دو پیلی سرافراز و دو جنگجوی
تبندی یکی بین سواران گرفت
بدیدانکه زو سست گشتند و خوار
عنان را گران کرد و اندر کشید
زمین را از پیهم ددان پاک
فرود آمد از نامور بارگی
بیزدان نمود آز و بیچارگی



FOLIO 433V *Isfandiyar's Second Course: He Slays the Lions*

FOLIO 434V *Isfandiyar's Third Course: He Slays the Dragon*

جهانجوی چون روی او را بدید	سرودی بر آواز برتر کشید	چنین گفت کای دادگر یک خدای	بکوه و بیابان توی رهنمای
بجستم هم اکنون پری چهره	بتن شهره وزبهره ور ابهره	مرا آفریننده این داد داد	می لعل و جام و پرستنده داد
یکی جام بر باده مشکبوی	بدو داد تا لعل گون کرد روی	یکی نغز پولاد زنجیر داشت	نهان کرده از جادو از زیر داشت
بیازوش بر بسته بد زردهشت	بگشتاسپ آورده بد از بهشت	بدان آهن از جان اسفندیار	بزدی گمانی ببد روزگار
بینداخت زنجیر بر گردنش	بدانسان که زنجیر شد بر تنش	زن جادو از خویشتن شیر کرد	جهانجوی آهنگ شمشیر کرد
بدو گفت بر من نیاری گزند	اگر آهنین کوه گردی بلند	چنین گفت اسفندیار دلیر	که ای زشت بتیاره گنده پیر
بیارای از ایدون که هستی رخت	که شمشیر یابد ازین پاسخت	بزنجیر شد گنده پیری تباه	سر و موی چون برف و رویی سیاه
یکی تیغ هندی بزد بر سرش			همه پیکر بد شد تا برش
چو جادو بمرد آسمان تیره شد			بدانسان که چشم اندرو خیره شد

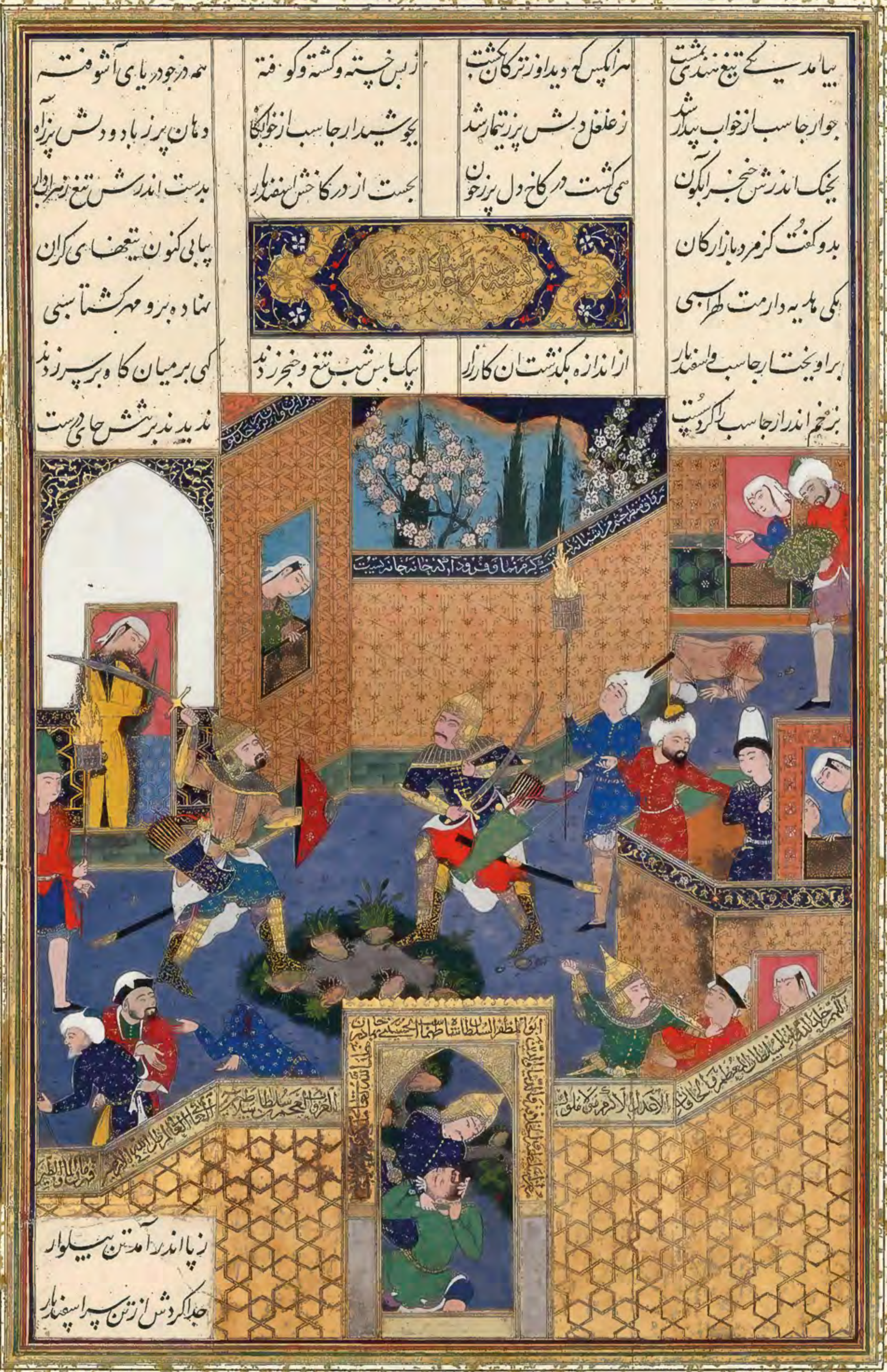
یکی باد و ابری برآمد سیاه	بپوشید دیدار خورشید و ماه	همانگه بیامد جهانجوی مرد	چو رعد خروشان یکی ویله کرد
پشوتن چو بشنید خود با سپاه	بزودی بیامد بنزدیک شاه	بدو گفت کای پهلوان جهان	سرافراز تر از میان مهان

FOLIO 435V *Isfandiyar's Fourth Course: He Slays the Sorceress*

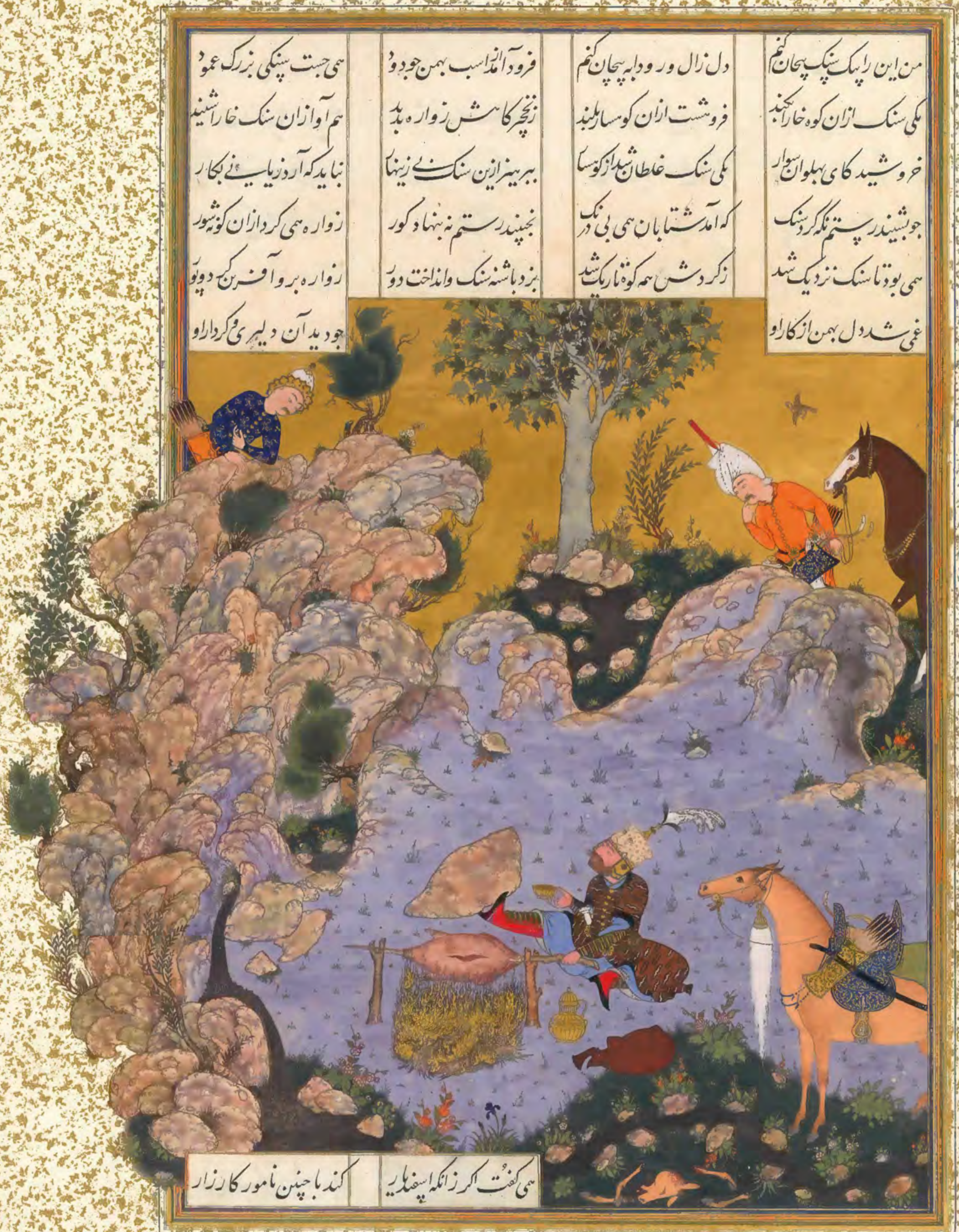
FOLIO 436V *Isfandiyar's Fifth Course: He Slays the Simurgh*

FOLIO 438R *Isfandiyar's Sixth Course: He Comes through the Snow*

FOLIO 439V *Isfandiyar's Seventh Course: He Crosses the River and Slays Gurgsar*



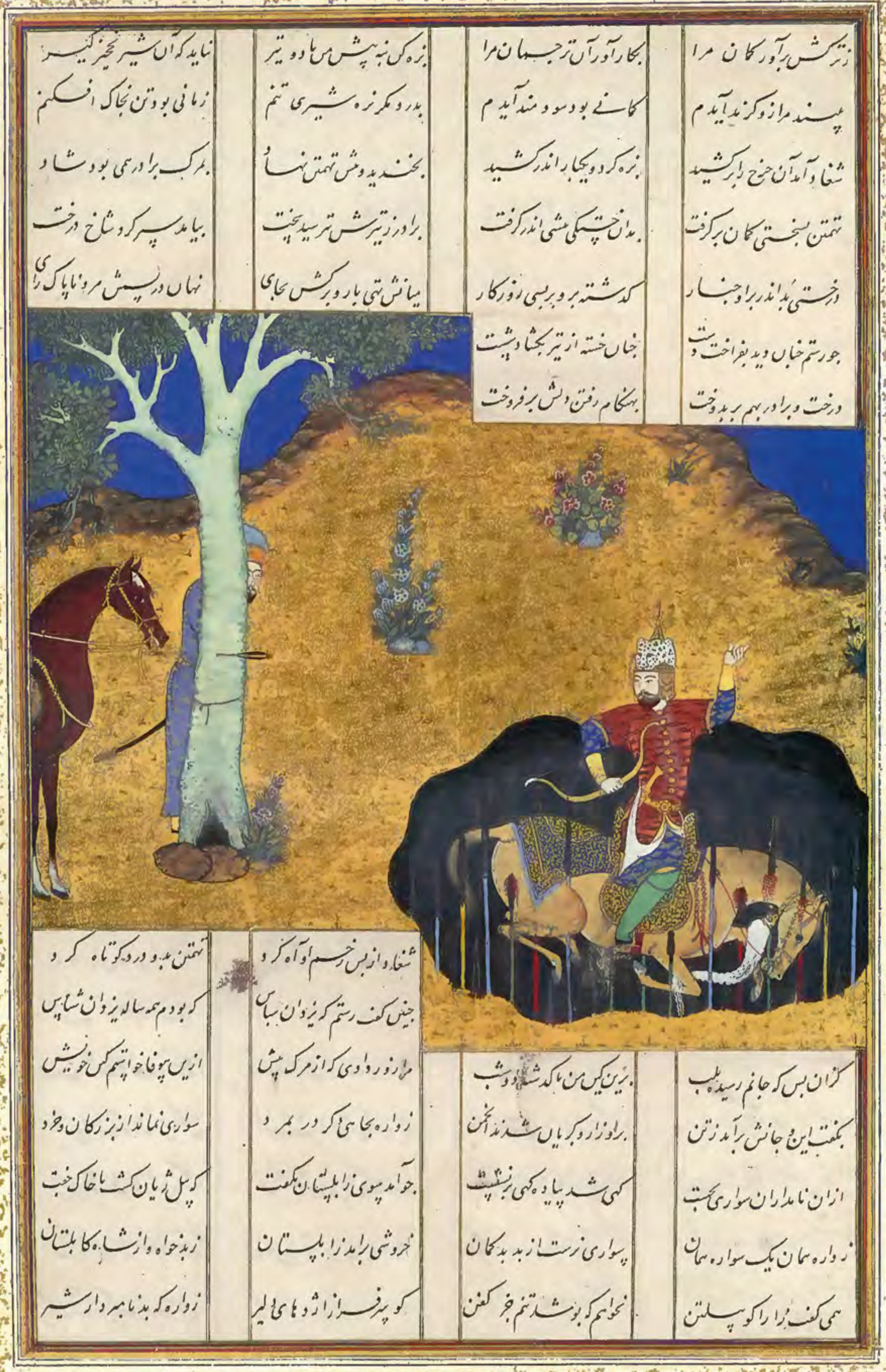
 FOLIO 442V *Isfandiyar Slays Arjasp and Takes the Brazen Hold*



FOLIO 451R *Rustam Kicks Aside Bahman's Boulder*

FOLIO 461V *Rustam and Isfandiyar Begin Their Combat*

FOLIO 466R *Rustam Slays Isfandiyar*



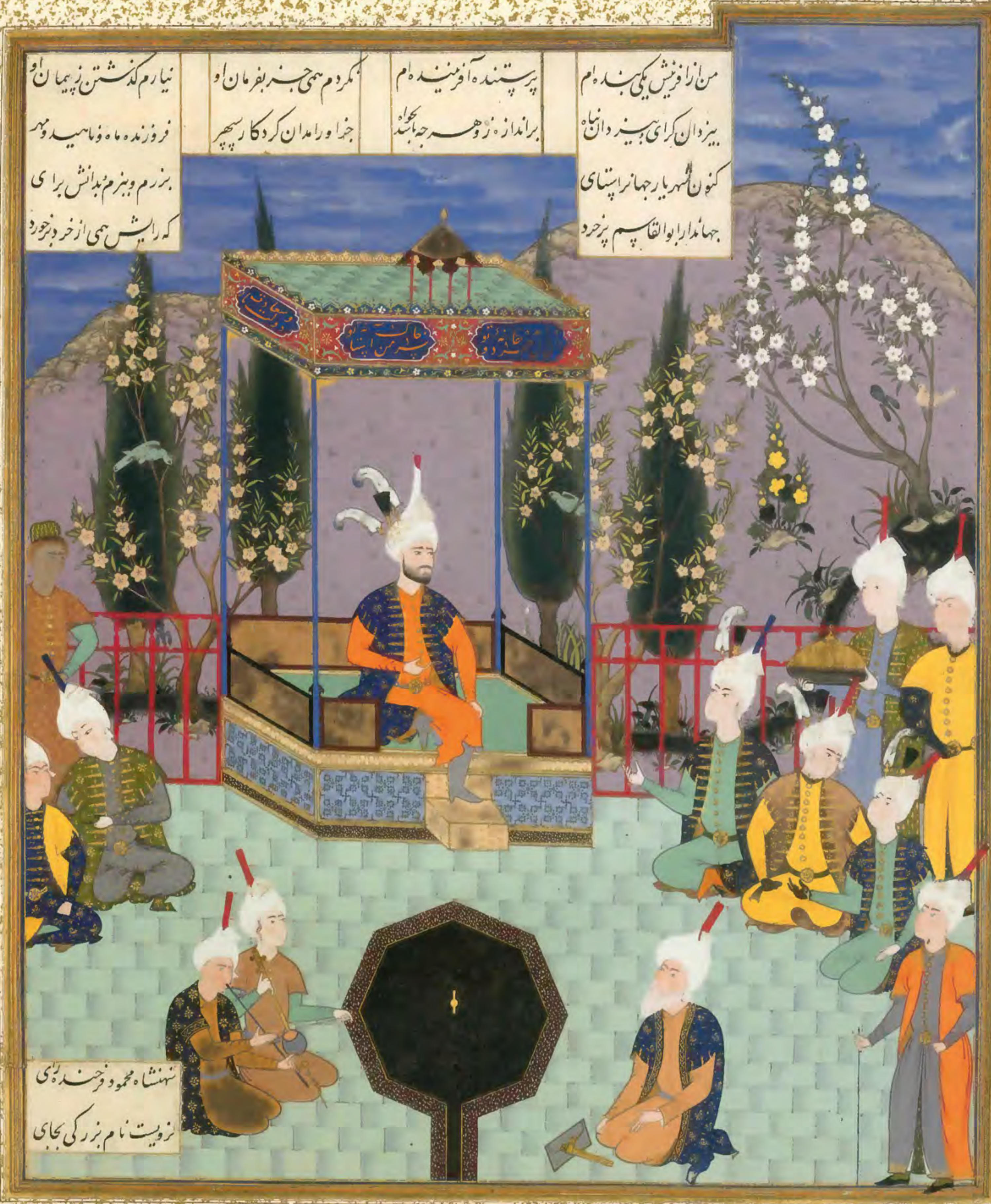
FOLIO 472R *Rustam Avenges His Own Impending Death*

FOLIO 475R *Faramarz Encircled While Battling Bahman*

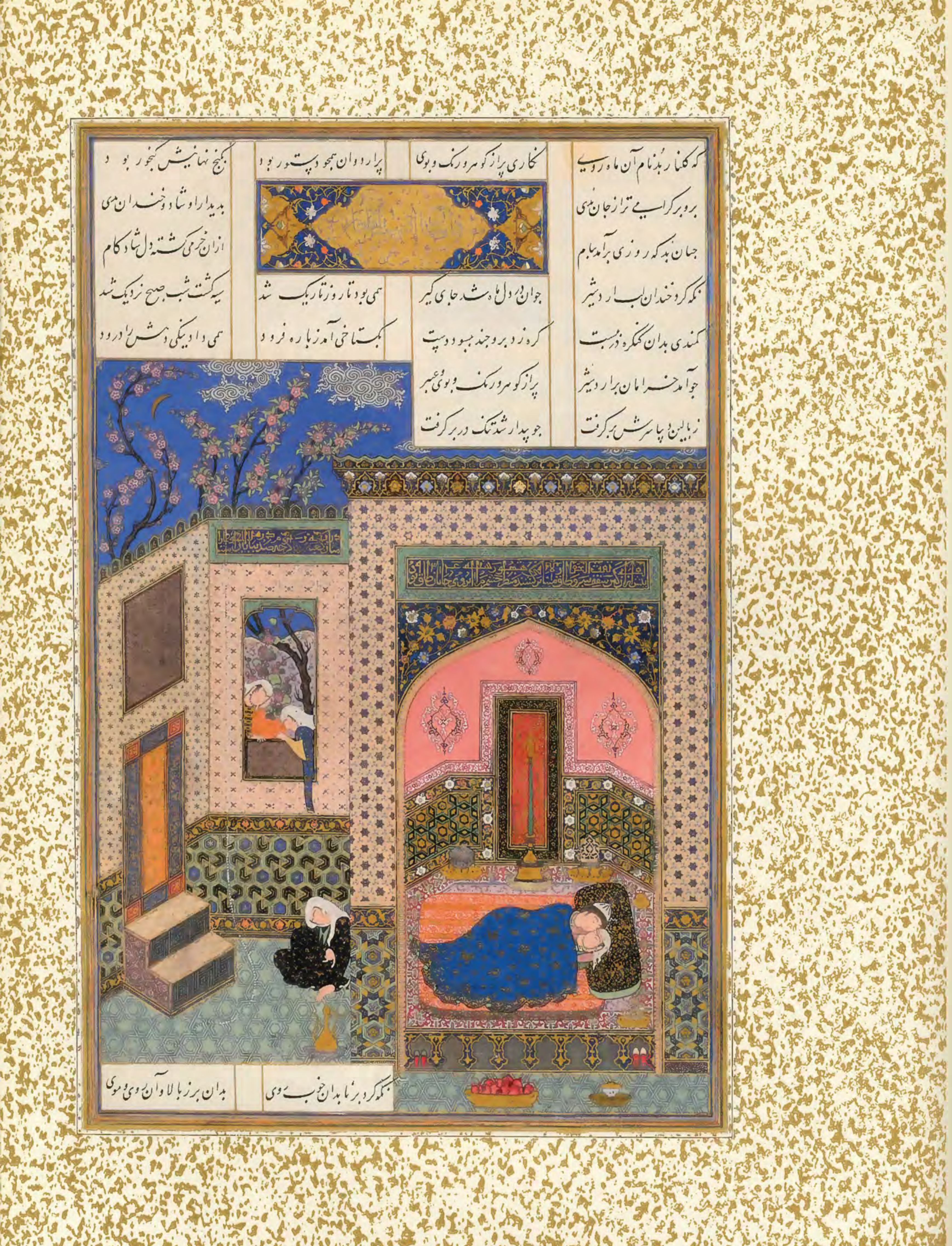
FOLIO 486R *Sikandar Attends the Dying Dara*

سکندر چو باد اندر آمد ز گرد
برد تیغ تیزی بران شیرمرد
ببرید تا سینه از گردنش
ز بالا بخاک اندر آمد تنش
شد از لشکرش بانگ تا آسمان
برفتند گردان ایران دمان

FOLIO 507V *Sikandar Builds the Wall against Yajuj and Majuj*



FOLIO 513V *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud*



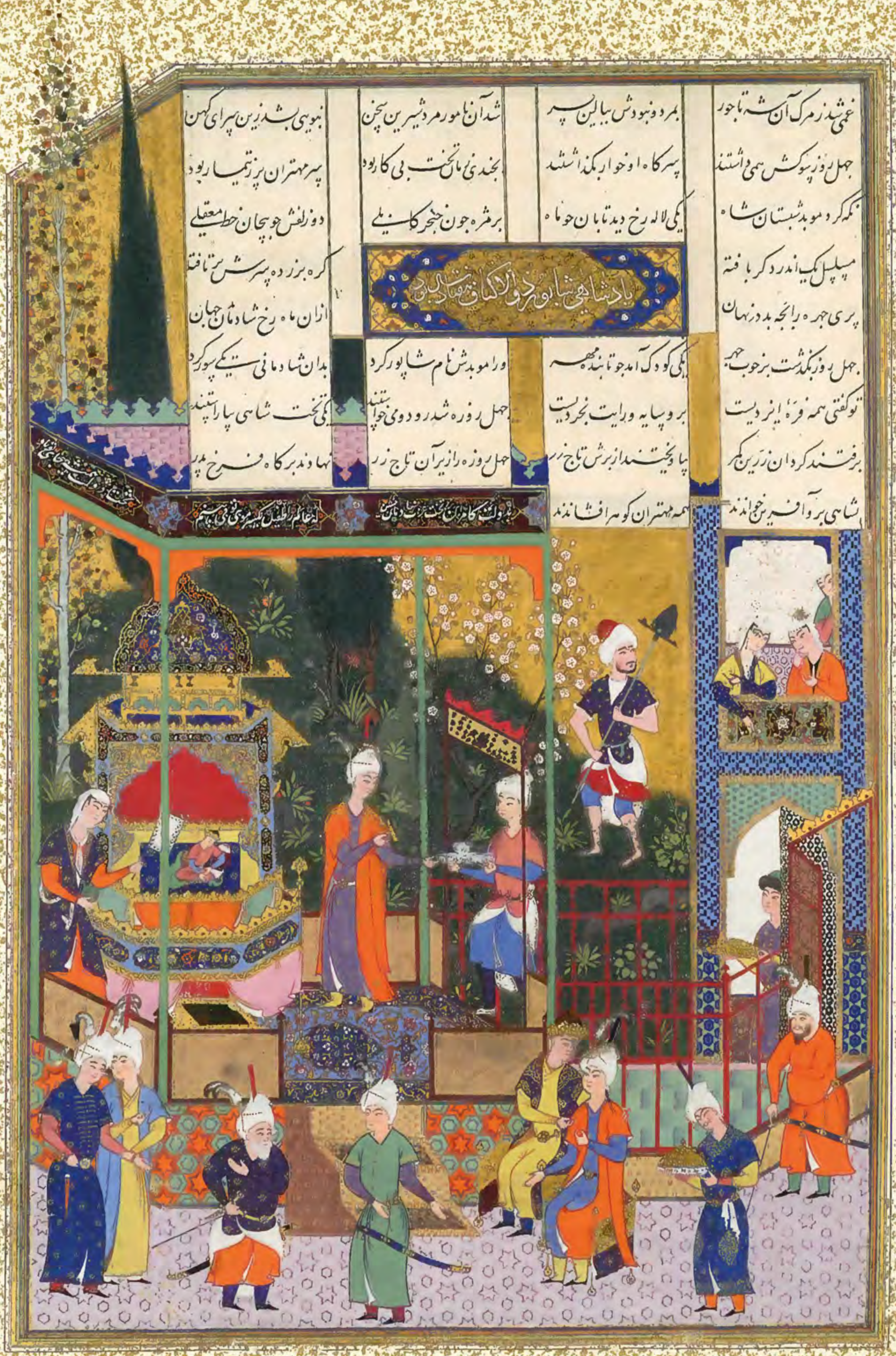
FOLIO 516V *Ardashir and the Slave Girl Gulnar*

FOLIO 519R *Ardashir's Victory over Bahman*

FOLIO 521V *The Story of Haftvad and the Worm*

FOLIO 527V *Prince Shapur I Meets the Daughter of Mihrak*

FOLIO 535R *Hurmuzd I's Last Testament to Prince Bahram I*

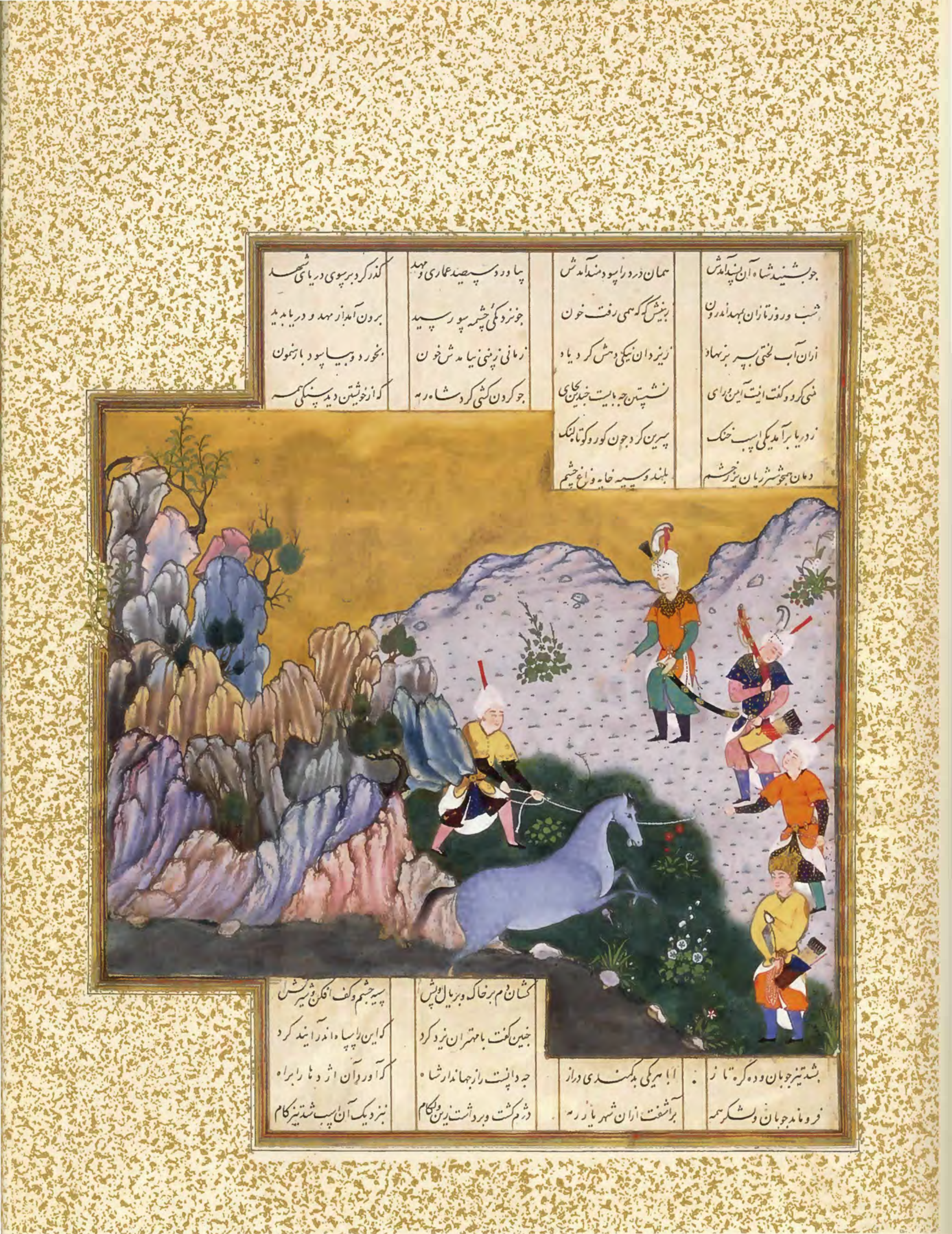


FOLIO 538R *The Coronation of the Infant Shapur II*

FOLIO 543R *Caesar Captive before Shapur II*

FOLIO 550V *Bahram Gur Takes His Harpist Hunting*

FOLIO 551V *Bahram Gur before His Father, Yazdigird I*



FOLIO 553R *Yazdigird I and the Water Horse That Killed Him*

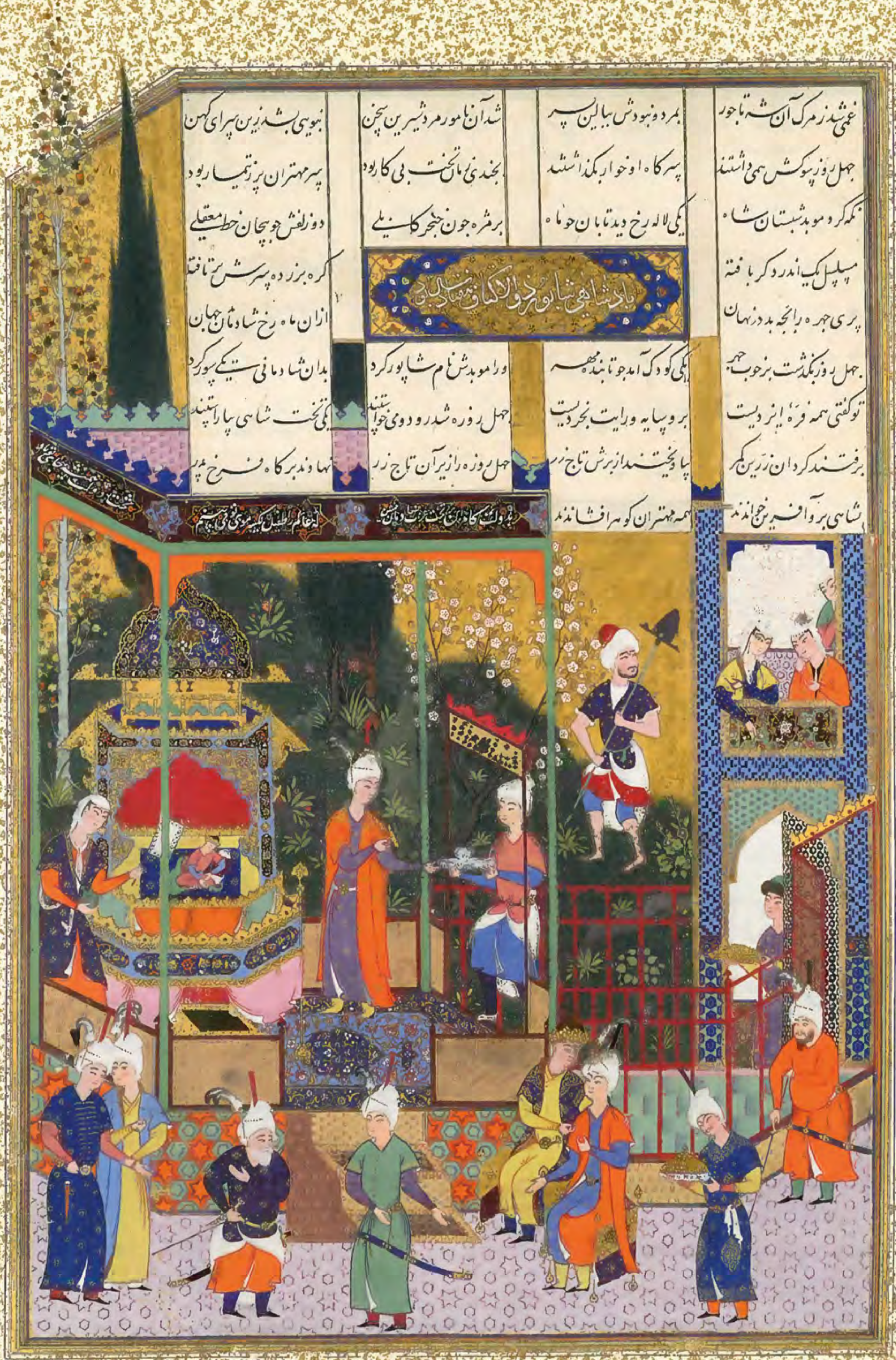
FOLIO 555V *Bahram Gur Negotiates for the Throne*

FOLIO 557V *Bahram Gur Slays the Lions and Mounts the Throne*

FOLIO 563R *The Shoemaker Who Rode a Lion*

خرد همچو آبست و دانش زمین / بدانگه جدا این جدا نیست زین
دل شاه کز مهر دوری گرفت / اگر باز گردد نباشد شگفت
سر آنکس که باشد مرا زیردست / همه شادمان باد و یزدان‌پرست
بخشنودی کردگار جهان / خرد باد دبیر آشکار و نهان
خردمند با مردم پارسا / چو جای سخن راند از پادشا
همه پخته باید که راند سخن / که گفتار نیکو نگردد کهن
نباید که گوید جز از نیکویی / وگر بد سرایی ز کس نشنوی
به پند دل پادشا راز تو / همان بشنود گوشش آواز تو
چه گفت آن سخنگوی دانش‌نیوش / که دیوار دارد به گفتار گوش
همه انجمن خواندند آفرین / بران شاه بینادل پاک‌دین
پراکنده گشت آن بزرگ انجمن / همه شاد زان پیر و پایه‌فکن
همان پور شاپور شاه اردشیر / همی داشت آیین داد و دانش‌پذیر
جهان پیر با پیر بد گشته شاد / چه نیکو بود شاه با بخشش و داد
همی راند با شرم و با دادکار / چنین تا برآمد برین روزگار
بگسترد کافور بر جای مشک / گل ارغوان شد به بالین خشک
چو دانست کز مرگ نتوان گریخت / بسی آب خونین ز مژگان بریخت
بگسترد فرش اندر ایوان خویش / بفرمود کآمدش بهرام پیش
بدو گفت کای پاک‌زاده پسر / بمردی و دانش برآورده سر
بمن پادشاهی نهادست روی / که رنگ رخم گشت همرنگ موی
خم آورد بالای سرو سهی / گل سرخ را داد رنگ بهی
چو روز تو آمد جهاندار باش / خردمند باش و بی‌آزار باش

FOLIO 535R *Hurmuzd I's Last Testament to Prince Bahram I*



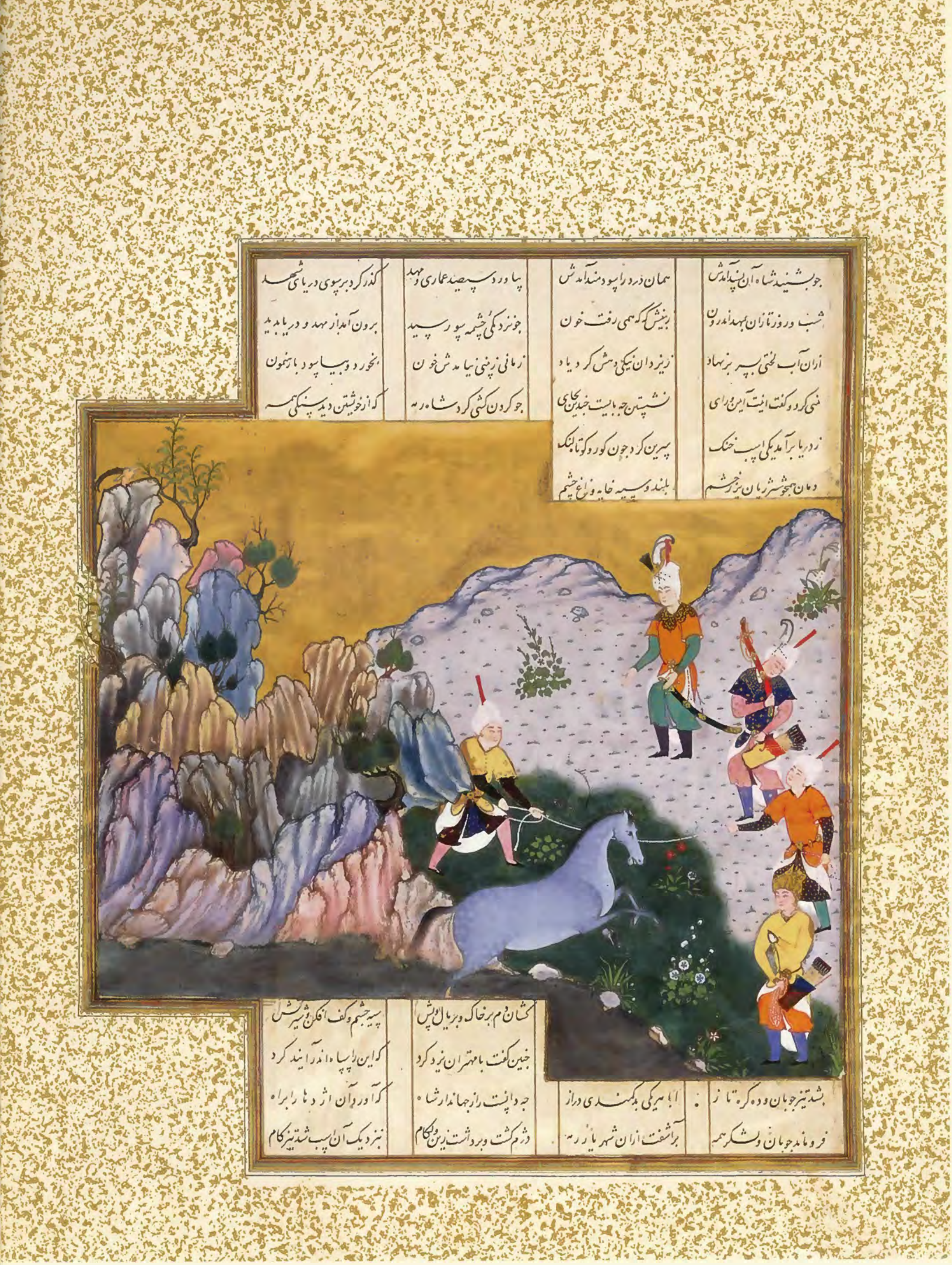
FOLIO 538R *The Coronation of the Infant Shapur II*

FOLIO 543R *Caesar Captive before Shapur II*

FOLIO 547R *Ardashir II's Accession to the Throne*

 FOLIO 550V *Bahram Gur Takes His Harpist Hunting*

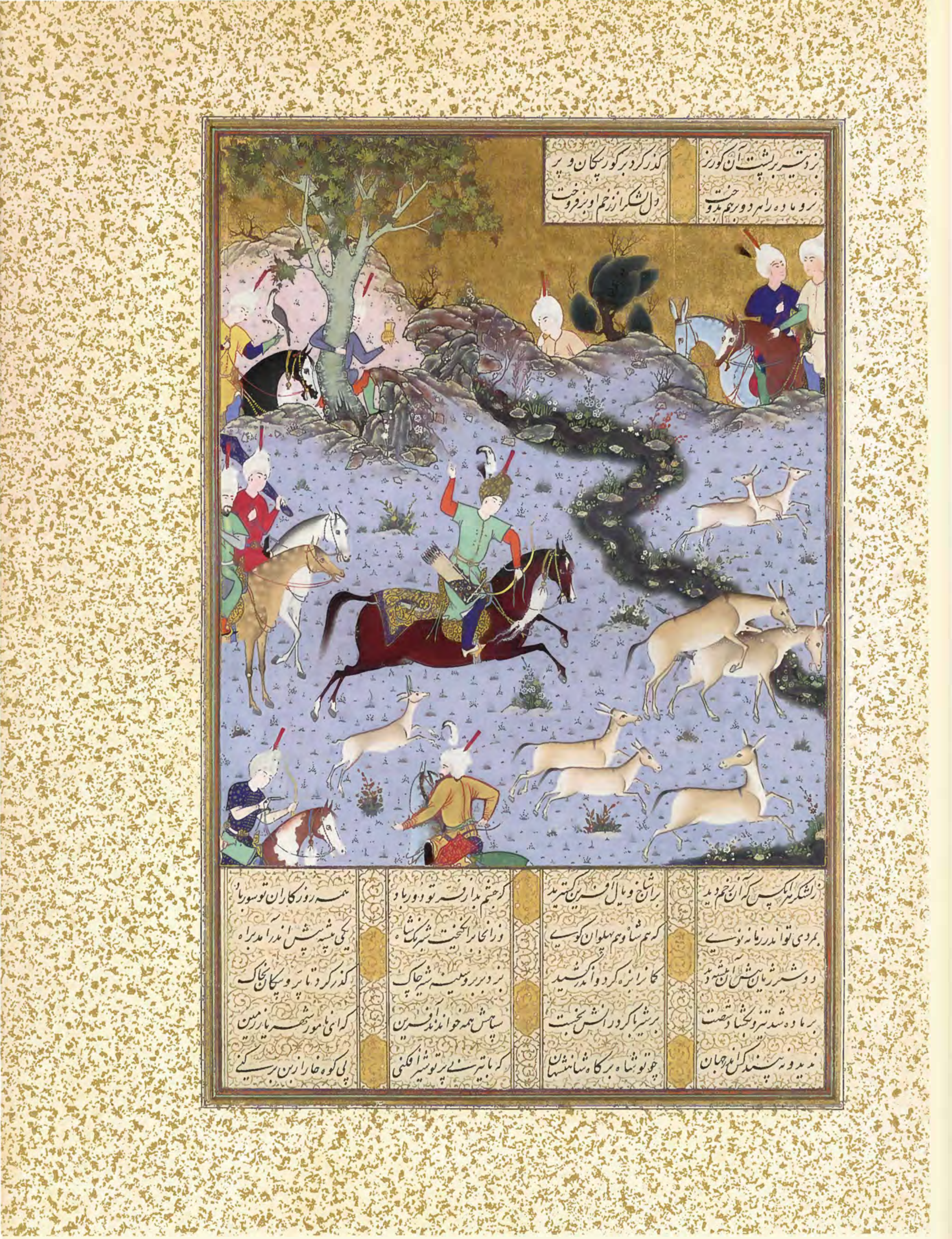
FOLIO 551V *Bahram Gur before His Father, Yazdigird I*



FOLIO 553R *Yazdigird I and the Water Horse That Killed Him*

FOLIO 555V *Bahram Gur Negotiates for the Throne*

 FOLIO 557V *Bahram Gur Slays the Lions and Mounts the Throne*



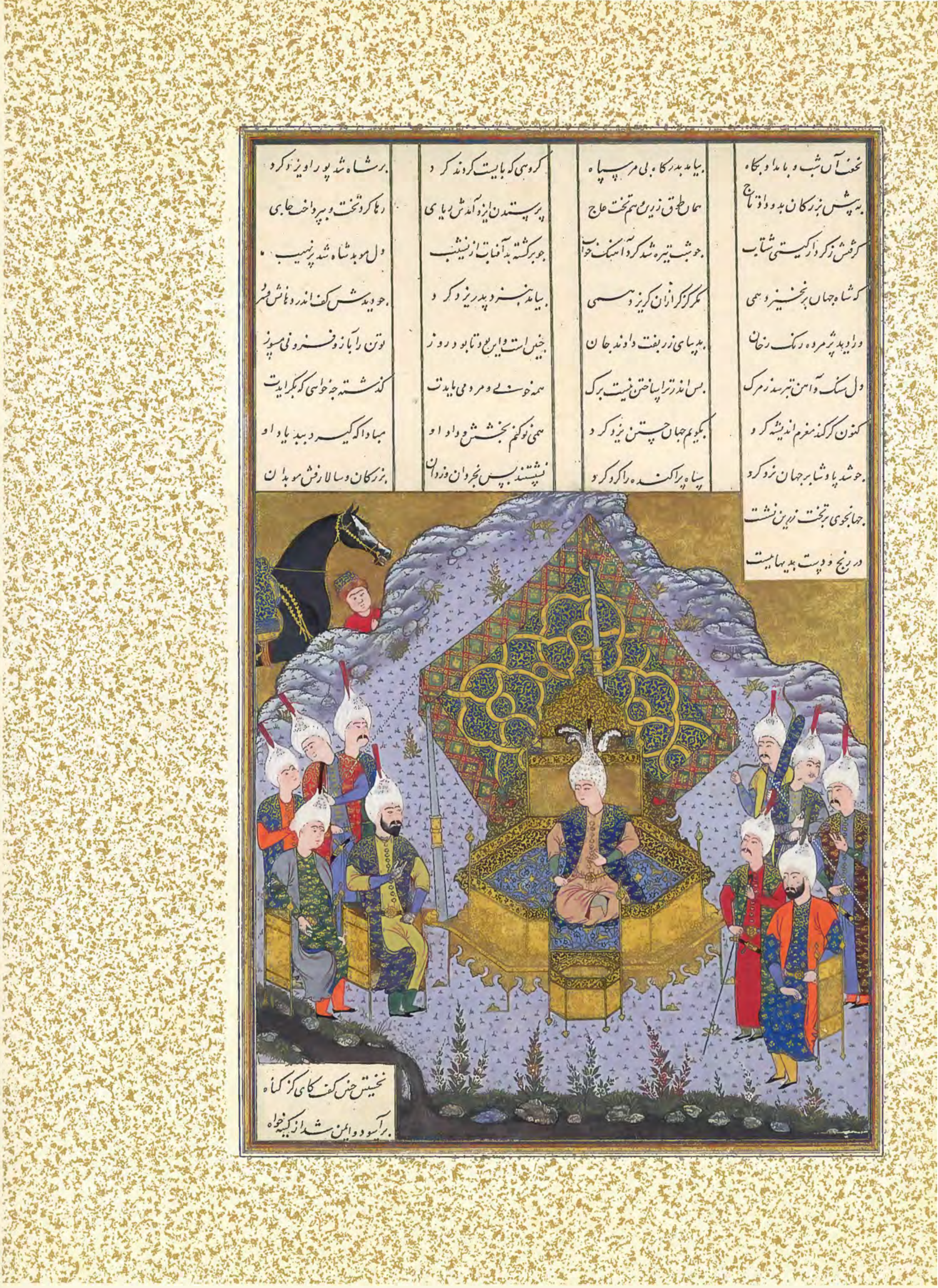
FOLIO 568R *Bahram Gur Pins the Coupling Onagers*

FOLIO 573R *Bahram Gur Applies the Sword to Lion Hunting*

 FOLIO 577V *Bahram Gur Advances by Stealth against the Khaqan*

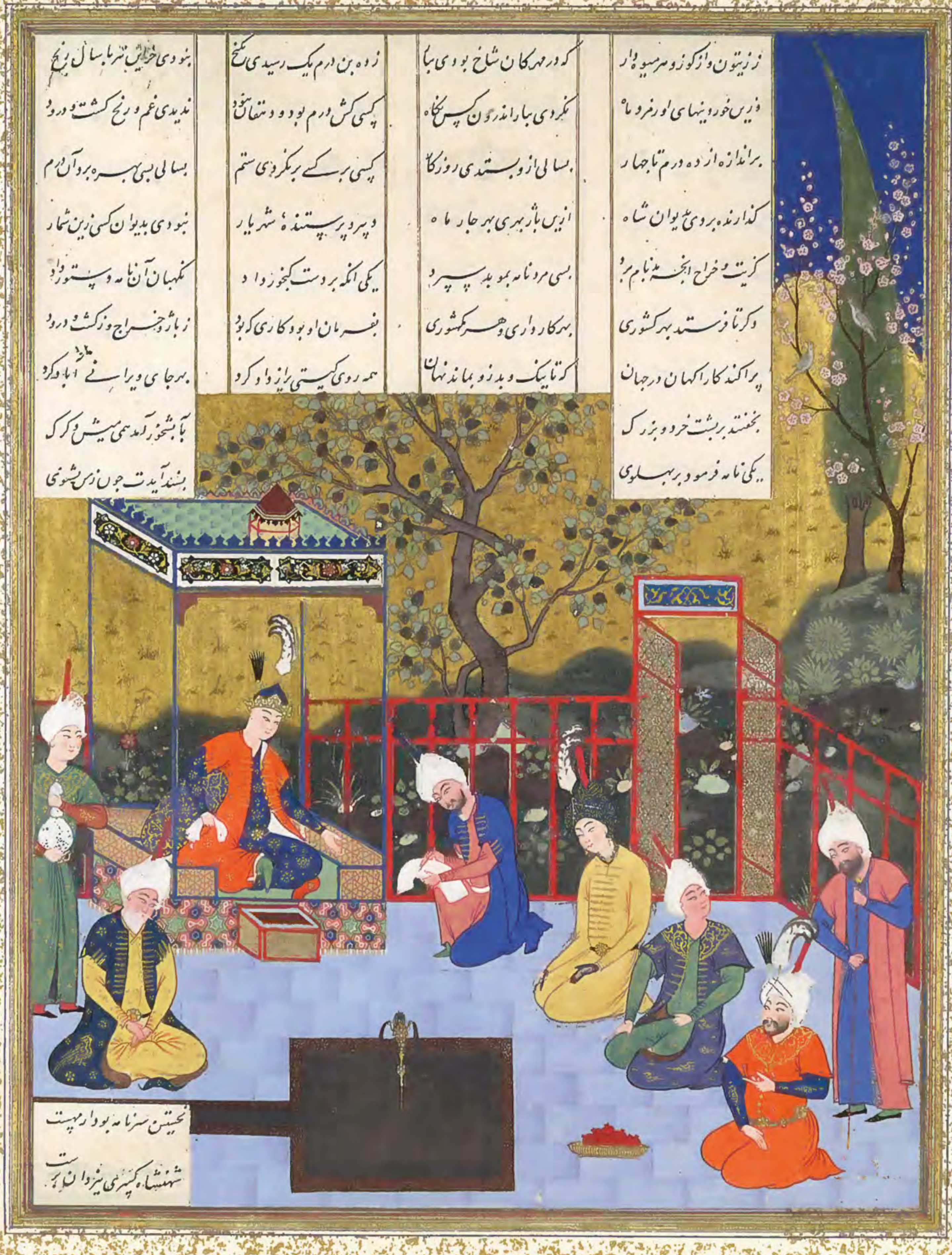
FOLIO 578R *The Khaqan Captive before Bahram Gur*

FOLIO 586R *Bahram Gur Slays the Rhino-Wolf*



FOLIO 592R *Yazdigird II Accedes to the Throne*

FOLIO 595V *Sufaray's Victory over the Haital*



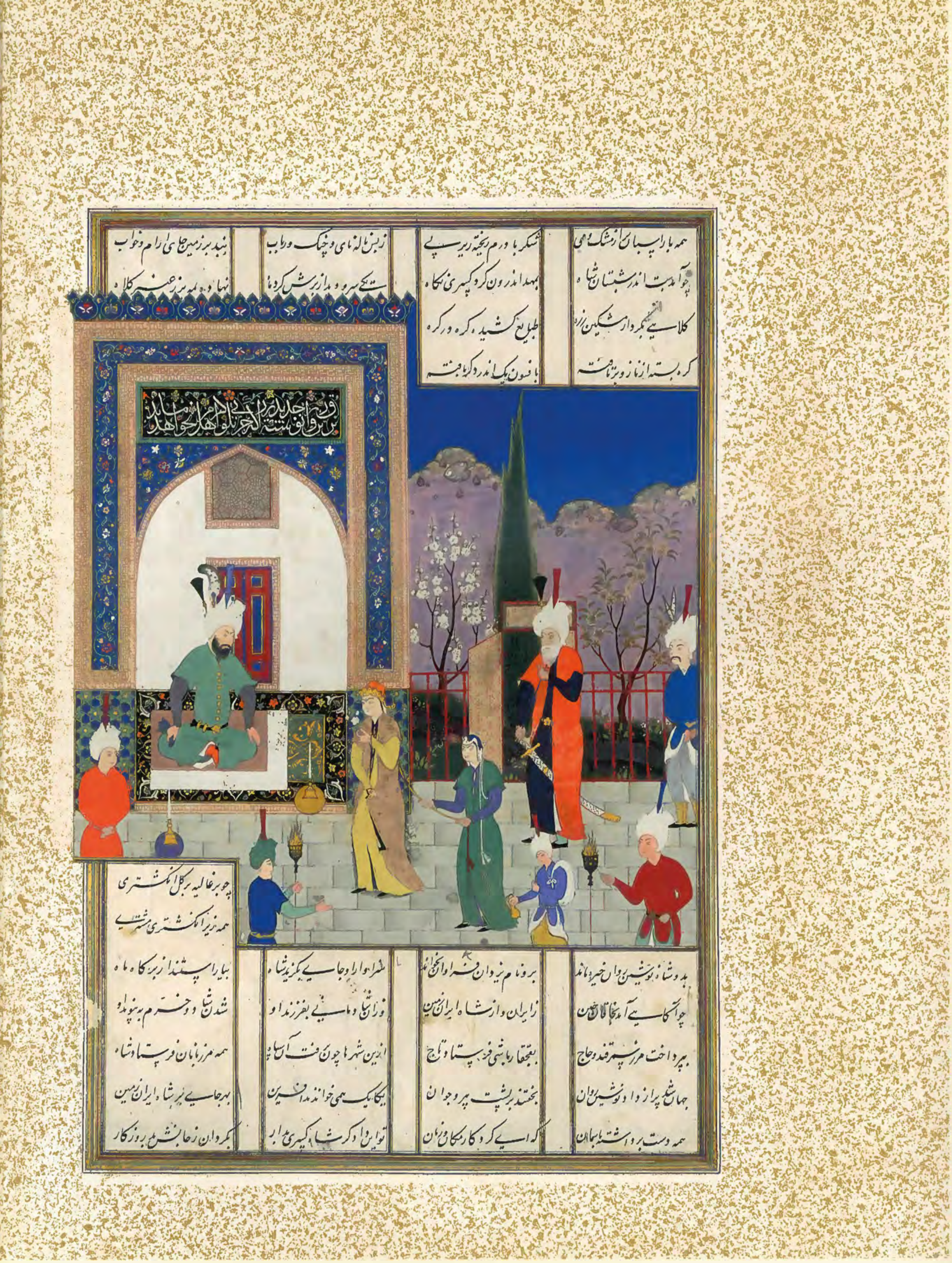
FOLIO 602V *Nushirvan Promulgates His Reforms*

 FOLIO 611V *Nushirvan Stopped by a Water Trench before Halab*

FOLIO 615V *The Rebellion of Nushzad, Son of Nushirvan*

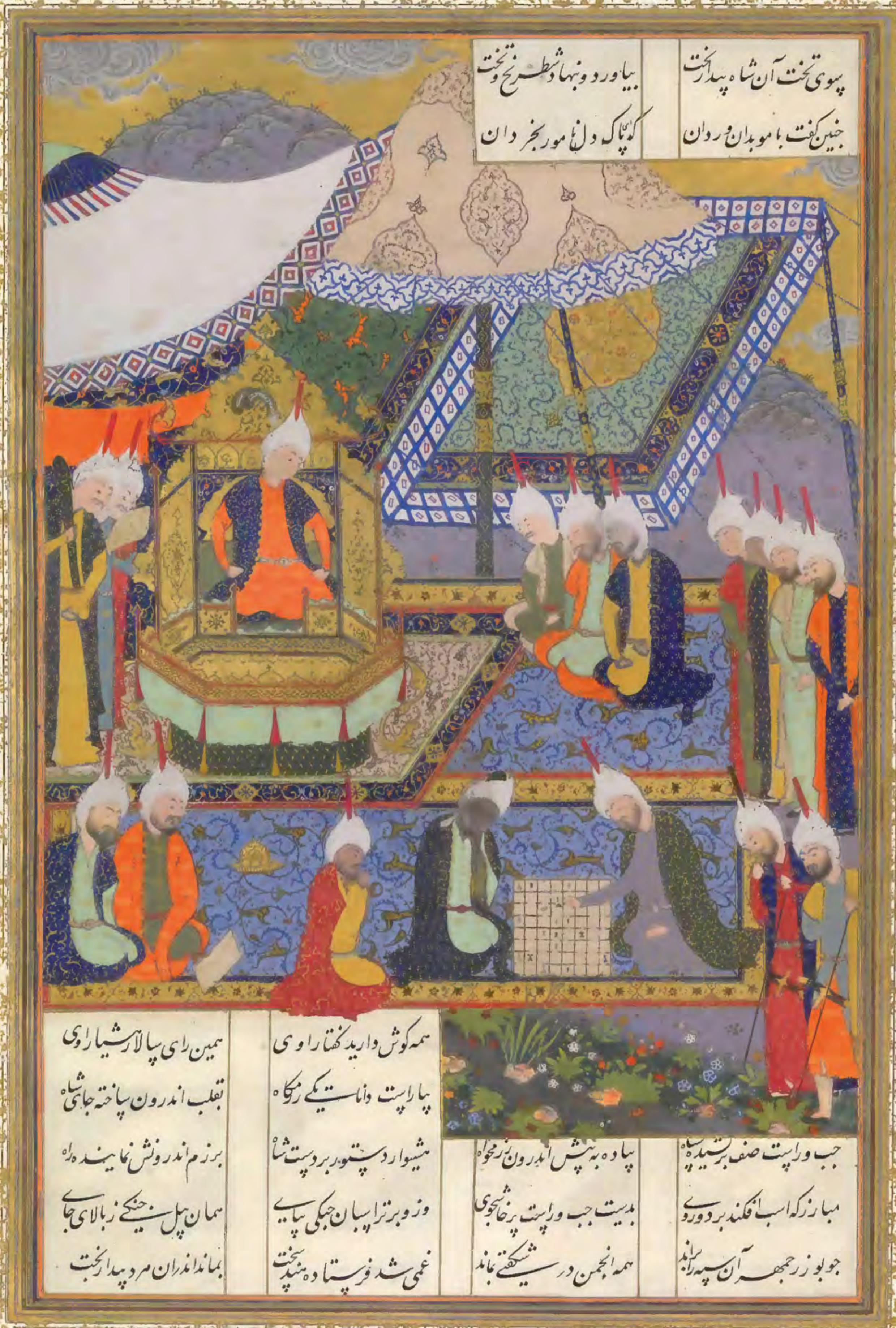
FOLIO 622R *Buzurjmihr Appears at Nushirvan's Fifth Assembly*

FOLIO 629R *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the Khaqan*

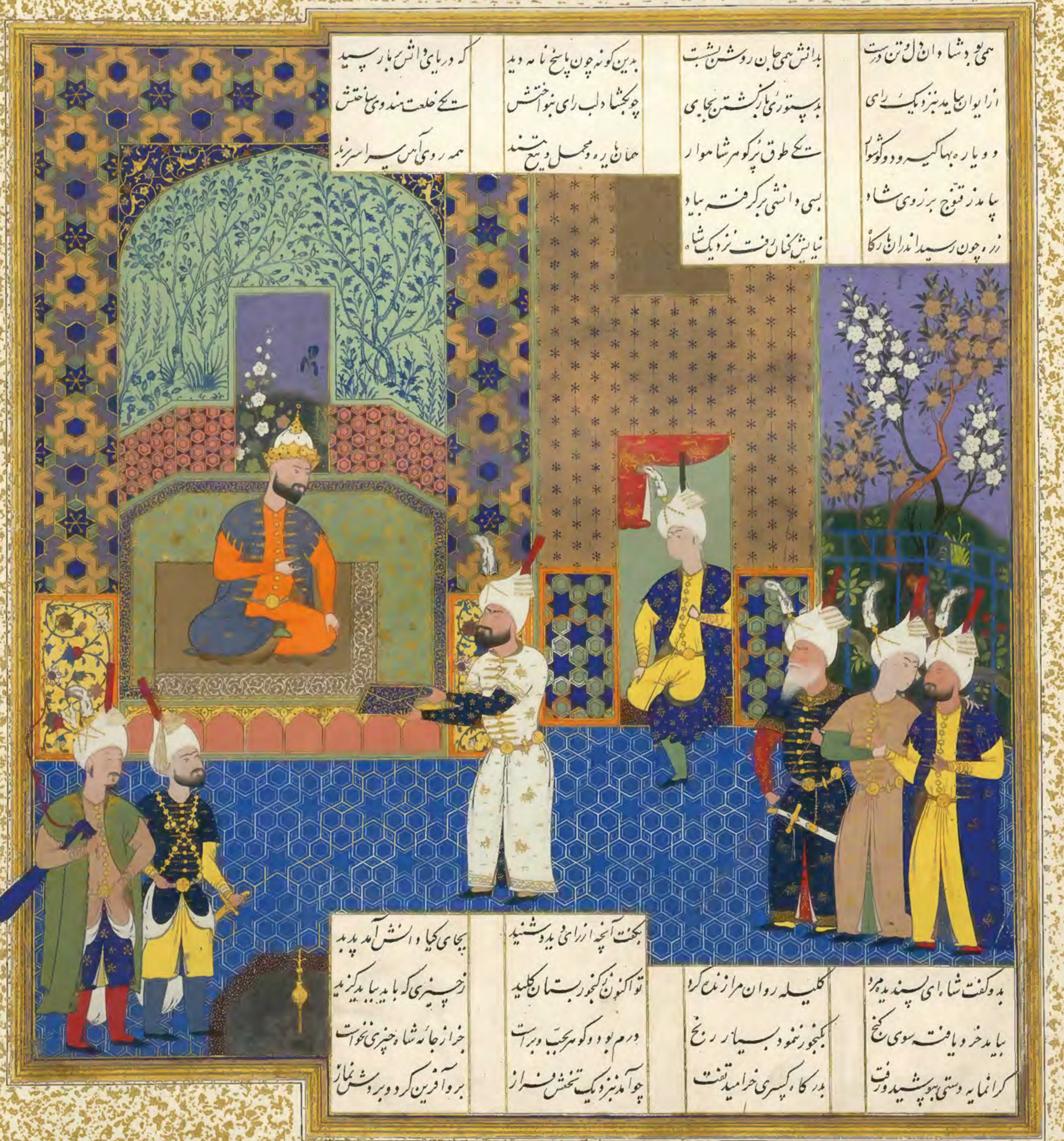


FOLIO 633V *Nushirvan Greets the Khaqan's Daughter*

FOLIO 638R *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the King of Hind*



FOLIO 643V *The Battle That Ended in Checkmate and Chess*



FOLIO 649R *Burzuy Brings Nushirvan the Book "Kalila and Dimna"*

FOLIO 654R *Nushirvan Records His Counsel for Hurmuzd*

[310] FOLIO 655V *Nushirvan Responds to Questions of the Grand Magus*

FOLIO 658V *The Great Sage Questions Hurmuzd before Nushirvan*

 FOLIO 671V *Bahram Chubina Slays Sava-Shah in Battle*

FOLIO 690V *Khusrau Parviz Cuts Down a Rebel Pursuer*

FOLIO 698V *The Envoys of Khusrau Parviz before Caesar*

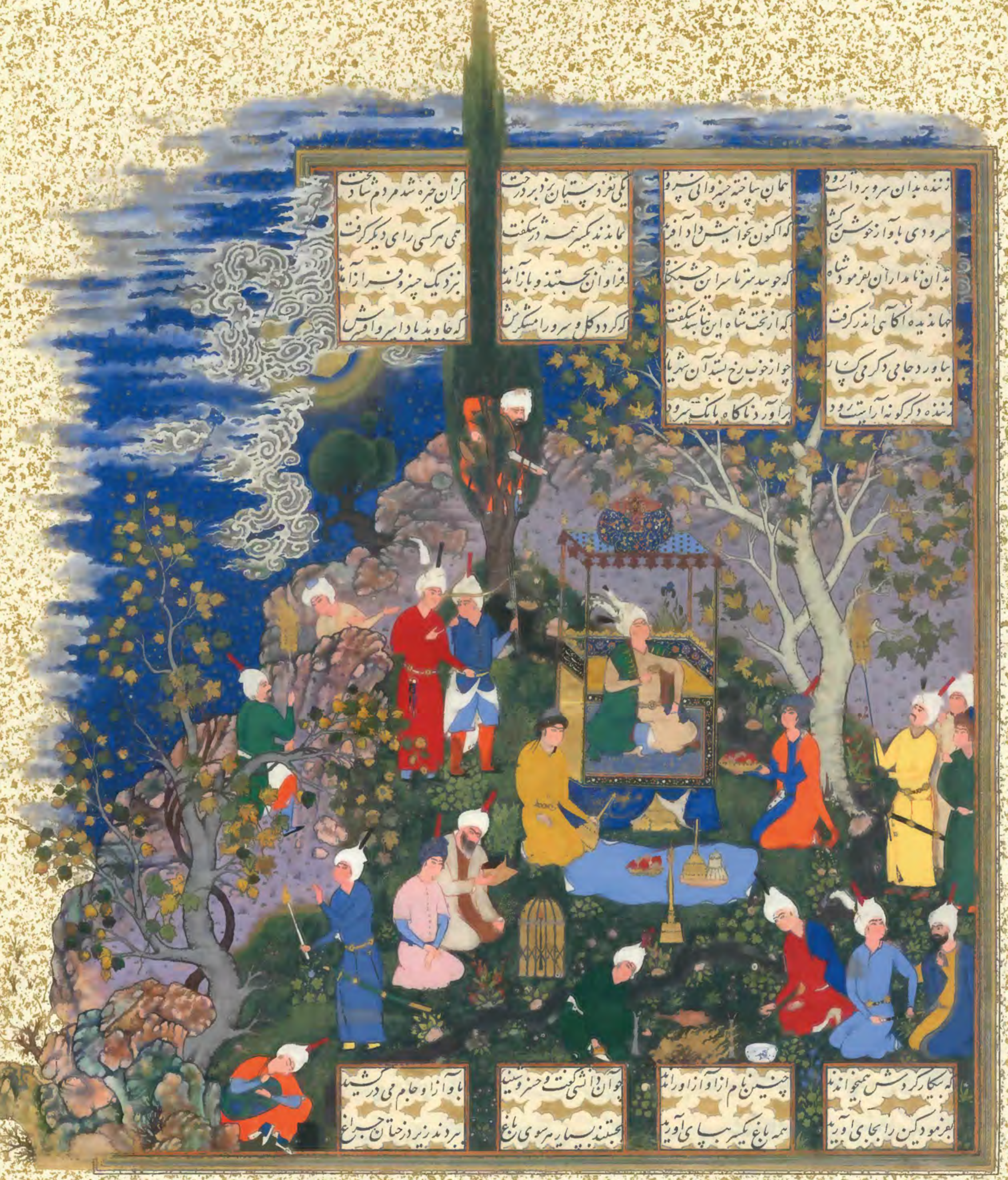
FOLIO 702R *Kharrad and the Weeping Statue*

FOLIO 707V *Khusrau Parviz's Charge against Bahram Chubina*

FOLIO 708V *The Angel Surush Rescues Khusrau Parviz from a Cul-de-sac*

FOLIO 715V *Bahram Chubina Slays the Lion-Ape*

FOLIO 721V *Bahram Chubina's Sister Slays the Khaqan's Brother*



 FOLIO 731R *Barbad the Concealed Musician*

FOLIO 735R *Rebels Defeat the Guard of Khusrau Parviz*

FOLIO 745V *The Coup against Usurper Shah Farayin Guraz*

Dramatis Personæ

This list contains images of most of the significant named characters in the illustrations. However, the artists of the *Shahnama* did not attempt to assign individualized facial details to figures that appear repeatedly in the narrative. Instead, the most distinctive personages, such as Rustam, have personalized clothing. The age of male figures is reflected in their facial hair, ranging from beardless to the small moustache of adolescents to fuller moustaches for mature men and beards for middle-aged and older characters. Women are either beauties or crones, and witches, of course, look shockingly ugly. The absence of historicizing in the depiction of figures in this manuscript is noteworthy. For the most part, the figures are dressed in the fashions of early sixteenth-century Iran, including the turban wrapped around the high taj, the cylindrical extension of the cap underneath the turban cloth. This was the trademark headdress of the Safavids and particularly their Qizilbash supporters. A collection of the characters illustrated in this manuscript brings to the fore the question of how Safavid artists approached portraiture and what their audience expected in the way of verisimilitude.

Afrasiyab

Folio 105r

Akvan, the Onager-Div

Folio 294r

Imam 'Ali

Folio 18v

Angel Surush

Folio 708v

Ardashir

Folio 516v

Ardashir II

Folio 547r

Arjasp

Folio 442v

Arzhang

Folio 122v

Ashkabus

Folio 268v

Aulad

Folio 121v

Azada

Folio 550v

Bahman

Folio 475r

Bahram

Folio 236r

Prince Bahram I

Folio 535r

Bahram Chubina

Folio 671v

Bahram Gur

Folio 550v

Barbad

Folio 731r

Barman

Folio 100r

Barta

Folio 345r

Bazur

Folio 254v

Bihzad

Folio 212r

Birmaya

Folio 30v

Bizhan

Folio 234r

Black Div

Folio 21v

Burzuy

Folio 649R

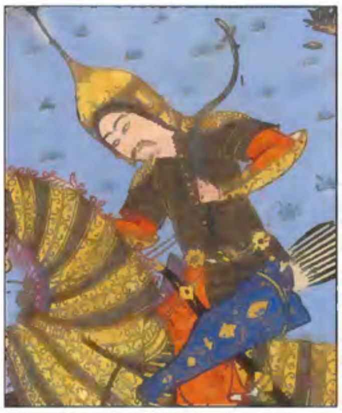
Buzurjmihr

Folio 622R

Caesar

Folio 403V

Chingish



Folio 272V

Dara

Folio 486R

Daughter of Haftvad

Folio 521V

Daughter of the Khaqan of Chin

Folio 633V

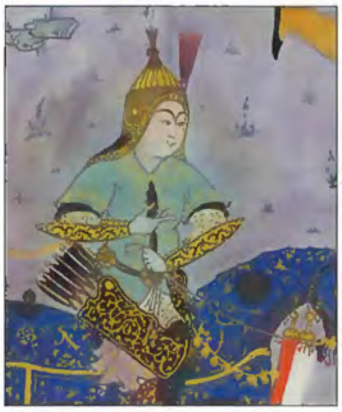
Daughter of Mihrak

Folio 527V

Daughters of Jamshid

Folio 27V

Faramarz



Folio 204V

Farangis

Folio 195R

Farayin Guraz

Folio 745V

Fariburz

Folio 243V

Faridun

Folio 32V

Farshidvard

Folio 336V

Farud

Folio 229V

Faruhil

Folio 342R

Firdausi

Folio 7R

Fur of Hind

Folio 496R

Gahar

Folio 281R

Garsivaz

Folio 171V

Gav

Folio 643V

Gayumars

Folio 20V

Giv

Folio 210V

Gudarz

Folio 236R

Gulnar

Folio 516V

Guraza

Folio 336V

Gurdafarid

Folio 143R

Gurdiya

Folio 721V

Gurgin

Folio 138R

Gurgsar

Folio 430R

Guruy

Folio 198R

Gushtasp

Folio 402r

Gustaham

Folio 349v

Hajir

Folio 343v

Imam Hasan or Husain

Folio 18v

Human

Folio 252v

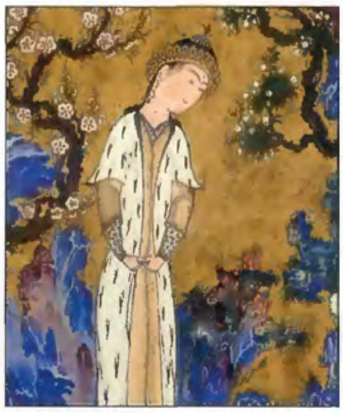
Hurmuzd

Folio 658v

Hurmuzd I

Folio 535r

Hushang



Folio 20v

Iblis

Folio 25v

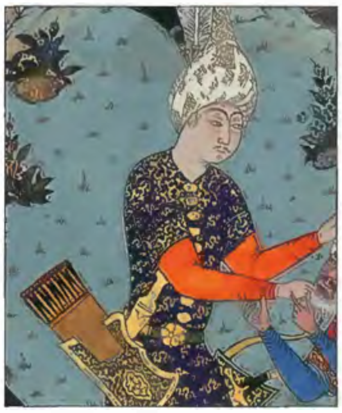
Ilyas

Folio 406r

Iraj

Folio 42v

Isfandiyar



Folio 422r

Ispanuy

Folio 239v

Jahn

Folio 385v

Jamasp

Folio 413r

Jamshid

Folio 24v

Jandal

Folio 39v

Jarira

Folio 183v

Kalbad

Folio 341v

Kamus

Folio 265v

Kappi, the Lion-Ape

Folio 715v

Kava

Folio 31v

Kay Kavus

Folio 134r

Kay Khusrau

Folio 210v

Kay Qubad

Folio 110v

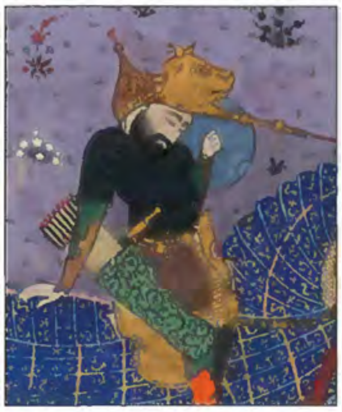
Khaqan of Chin

Folio 261r

Kharrad-Barzin

Folio 698v

Khazarvan



Folio 104r

Khushnavaz

Folio 595v

Khusrau Parviz

Folio 690v

Kuhram

Folio 345r

Kundrau

Folio 34v

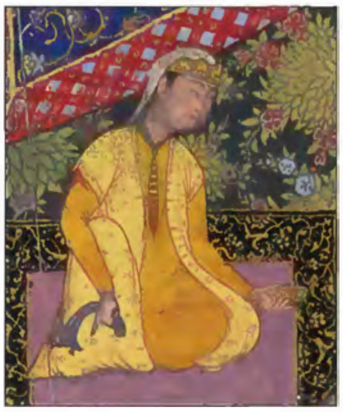
Lahhak

Folio 349v

Sultan Mahmud

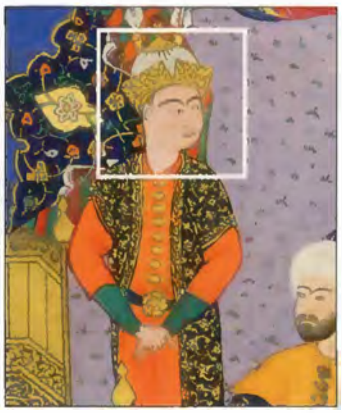
Folio 513v

Manizha



Folio 300v

Manuchihr



Folio 51v

Mihr-i Hurmuzd

Folio 742v

Mihrab

Folio 67v

Mihran Sitad

Folio 633v

Mirdas, King of Arabia

Folio 25v

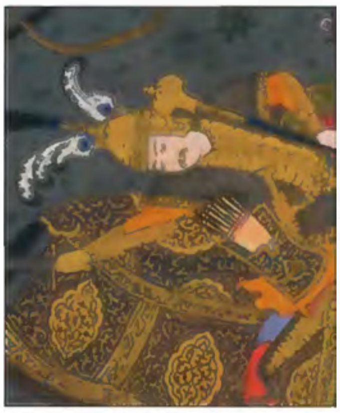
Prophet Muhammad

Folio 18v

Munzir

Folio 555v

Nastihan



Folio 328r

Prince Nauzar

Folio 79v

Nu'man

Folio 555v

Nushirvan

Folio 602v

Nushzad?

Folio 615v

Pilsam

Folio 138r

Piran

Folio 188v

Puladvand

Folio 291r

Qalun

Folio 111v

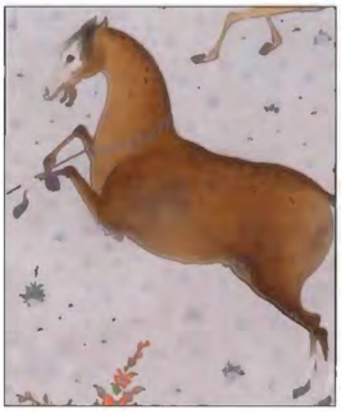
Qaran

Folio 57v

Qubad

Folio 54v

Rakhsh



Folio 109r

Ram Barzin

Folio 615v

Rudaba

Folio 69v

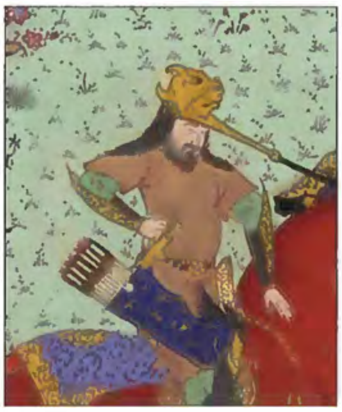
Ruhham

Folio 254v

Rustam

Folio 110v

Ruyin



Folio 343r

Salm

Folio 42v

Sam

Folio 63v

Sarv, King of Yemen

Folio 39v

Sava-Shah

Folio 671v

Shaghad

Folio 472r

Shangul, Shah of Hind

Folio 279v

Shapur I

Folio 527v

Shapur II

Folio 543r

Shida

Folio 360v

Sikandar

Folio 486r

Simurgh

Folio 63v

Sindukht

Folio 68v

Siyamak

Folio 20v

Siyavush

Folio 163v

Sorceress

Folio 435v

Sudaba

Folio 130r

Sufaray

Folio 595v

Suhrab

Folio 141r

Surkha

Folio 204v

Tahmina

Folio 141r

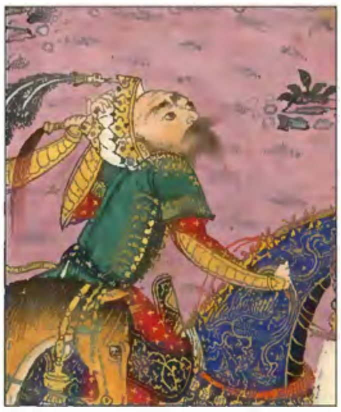
Tahmuras

Folio 23v

Talhand?

Folio 643v

Tazhav



Folio 239v

Tukhwar

Folio 229v

Tur

Folio 42v

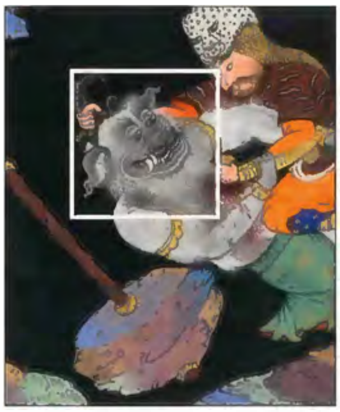
Tus

Folio 229v

Tuvurg

Folio 721v

White Div



Folio 124r

Yazdigird I

Folio 551v

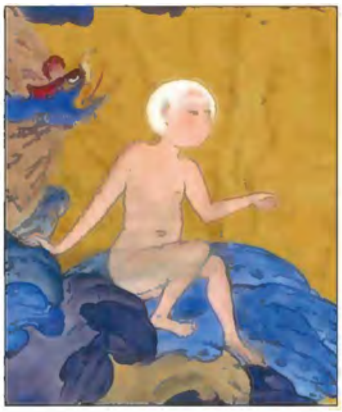
Yazdigird II

Folio 592r

Zahhak

Folio 26v

Zal



Folio 62v

Zanga

Folio 138r

Zangula

Folio 342r

Notes on Folios

Numerals on left refer to page numbers.

62 Double-Page Illuminated Frontispiece
Folios 2v and 3r
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

64 *Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna*
Folio 7r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto
(AKM 00156)

On his way to seek the patronage of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna for the *Shahnama*, Firdausi encounters three of the sultan's poets, who test his poetic skills before allowing him to join them.

65 *Firdausi Proves His Literary Talents at the Court of Sultan Mahmud*
Folio 10r
Attributed to Mir Musavvir
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Firdausi's presence at the court of Sultan Mahmud and his commission to write the *Shahnama* chagrin his jealous rivals, who maintain that only the stories and not Firdausi's poetry are worthy of royal favor. A literary debate ensues in which Firdausi, in the presence of the sultan, composes new verses on the spot that enliven an otherwise dull episode, a feat applauded by Sultan Mahmud.

66 Dedicatory Rosette
Folio 16r
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

67 *In Praise of God and the Intellect* (illuminated page)
Folio 16v
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

68 *Firdausi's Parable of the Ship of Shiism*
Folio 18v
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.1)

Passengers on seventy ships representing the seventy religions of mankind perish in a stormy sea. Firdausi rides with 'Ali, Hasan, Husain, and Muhammad, knowing they will guide him in the afterlife.

69 *The Court of Gayumars*
Folio 20v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto
(AKM 00165)

The first shah, Gayumars, rules over an idyllic world in which man and beast coexist peacefully. Here, his son Siyamak and grandson Hushang learn that Ahriman, the incarnation of evil, has plotted the downfall of man.

70 *Hushang Slays the Black Div*
Folio 21v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
S. C. Welch Family

On the orders of his grandfather, Hushang avenges the murder of his father, Siyamak, and wages war against Ahriman and his *divs* (demons) with an army of lions, wolves, leopards, and angels.

71 *The Feast of Sada*
Folio 22v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.2)

Hushang succeeds Gayumars and presides over the development of metalworking and animal husbandry. When he throws a rock, striking a boulder, and sparks turn to flame, he recognizes fire as a divine gift and initiates the feast of Sada to celebrate this discovery.

72 *Tahmuras Defeats the Divs*
Folio 23v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.3)

The greatest feat of Tahmuras, Hushang's son and successor, is the defeat of Ahriman and his *divs*, whose lives he spares in return for being taught the alphabet in thirty scripts.

73 *The Court of Jamshid*
Folio 24v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad and workshop
The Ebrahimi Family Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (ELS2010.7.1)

The first decades of the reign of Jamshid, who succeeds Tahmuras, see the invention of metallurgy, weaving, and arts and crafts, plus the organization of society into castes. He also initiates the celebration of Nauruz (New Year's Day).

74 *The Death of King Mirdas*
Folio 25v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

The just king of Arabia, Mirdas, has an ambitious son, Zahhak, who joins Iblis (Satan) in a plot to kill his father. Iblis orders a pit dug on the palace grounds, and when Mirdas seeks seclusion in the garden in the middle of the night, he falls into the pit and dies.

75 *The Snakes of King Zahhak*
Folio 26v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Now king of Arabia, Zahhak employs a cook—Iblis in disguise—who produces a succession of delicacies that earn Zahhak's praise. For his efforts the cook asks only to kiss the king's shoulders. Upon doing so, the cook disappears, and from Zahhak's shoulders spring two ravenous snakes whose appetites can be appeased only with human brains.

76 *Zahhak Receives the Daughters of Jamshid*
Folio 27v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

As Jamshid becomes increasingly prideful, Iran declines. Zahhak invades and kills Jamshid. During his thousand-year reign of terror, Zahhak takes Jamshid's two daughters as his wives.

77 *The Nightmare of Zahhak*
Folio 28v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar (MS.41.2007)

Near the end of his reign, Zahhak wakes screaming, having dreamed that a warrior with an ox-head mace dragged him, bound, to Mount Damavand.

78 *Zahhak Is Told His Fate*
Folio 29v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.4)

Zahhak summons his magi to explain his nightmare. When one of them tells him that a yet unborn youth, Faridun, will claim the throne following Zahhak's murder of his father, Zahhak faints.

79 *Zahhak Slays Birmaya*
Folio 30v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by Mir Sayyid 'Ali
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

Soon after the birth of Faridun, Zahhak finds the boy's family and kills his father. The boy's mother escapes with her baby but delivers him to a cowherd, who feeds Faridun with the milk of his cow, Birmaya. After three years Zahhak tracks down the cow and slays her, but Faridun has already fled to safety.

80 *Kava Tears Zahhak's Scroll*
Folio 31v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

At a ceremony where Zahhak forces his noblemen to sign a scroll proclaiming his justice and honesty, the blacksmith Kava protests his last living son's being chosen to be fed to Zahhak's snakes. He then rips the scroll to shreds.

81 *Faridun Orders the Ox-Head Mace*
Folio 32v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by 'Abd al-'Aziz
Private collection

At age sixteen Faridun emerges from hiding. First, he parleys with his two brothers, then orders an ox-head mace to be fashioned, so he can lead an army against Zahhak.

82 *Faridun Crosses the River Dijla*
Folio 33v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar (MS.40.2007)

Ox-head mace in hand, Faridun leads his army to the banks of the River Dijla (modern Tigris). When the boatmen refuse to ferry the army across the river, Faridun and his horse plunge in, followed by his men, and ford the river.

83 *Faridun Enthroned in the Palace of Zahhak*
Folio 34v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Having seized Zahhak's palace and throne, Faridun finds the daughters of Jamshid, to whom he introduces religion. Although Zahhak had fled before Faridun's arrival, his wily vizier Kundrau soon arrives, unaware of what has transpired.

84 *The Feast of Faridun and Kundrau*
Folio 35r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab assisted by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Faridun prevails upon Kundrau to organize a victory feast, but Kundrau flees to join Zahhak. He is gone by morning.

85 *Faridun Strikes Down Zahhak*
Folio 36v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by 'Abd al-'Aziz
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Purchase (F1996.2)

Furious with jealousy, Zahhak returns to his palace in disguise, intent on killing Faridun and the girls. Faridun intercepts him and brings his mace down on Zahhak's head. Before he can finish him off, the angel Surush intervenes and advises Faridun to bind Zahhak and take him to the mountains.

86 *The Death of Zahhak*
Folio 37v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by Mir Sayyid 'Ali
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00155)

Bound in chains, Zahhak is taken to a cave in Mount Damavand, Iran's highest peak. He hangs there for eternity. One thousand years of evil have ended, and Faridun ushers in a new era of justice.

87 *The Court of Faridun*
Folio 38v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

When news of Faridun's enthronement spreads, his mother, Faranak, sends Arabian horses, gold, gems, and other gifts. Notables the world over offer gifts and journey to pay homage to the new king.

88 *Faridun's Envoy to King Sarv: First Interview*
Folio 39v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The daughters of Jamshid bear Faridun three sons, whom he loves so much that he refuses to name them. When they reach maturity, he sends his adviser, Jandal, to find for them three wives who also have remained unnamed because of their father's love. Jandal finds three princesses in Yemen, the daughters of King Sarv, but Sarv is loath to part with his cherished ones.

89 *Faridun's Envoy to King Sarv: Second Interview*
Folio 40v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Sarv's advisers tell him that he cannot avoid marrying his daughters to Faridun's sons without a cunning plan. Meanwhile, Jandal is summoned again and informed that the proposal will be entertained seriously if he brings Faridun's three sons from Iran. Jandal kisses Sarv's throne and departs.

90 *Faridun's Sons with the Daughters of King Sarv*
Folio 41v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After failing to fool the sons of Faridun about the ages of his daughters, Sarv agrees to the marriages. Sarv then conjures up a nighttime frost to freeze the princes as they sleep, but they are protected by Faridun's goodness, and the Yemeni king finally concedes to the triple wedding.

91 *Faridun Tests His Sons*

Folio 42v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Private collection

When his sons return to Iran, Faridun decides to test their mettle by appearing to them in the form of a dragon. The eldest son flees, the middle son threatens to fight the dragon, and the youngest son orders the dragon to disappear or face the force of Faridun and his sons.

92 *Faridun Divides His Kingdom*

Folio 43v
Attributed to ʻAbd al-ʻAziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

His human form restored, Faridun greets his sons and admits his ruse. With new insight into their characters, he names them: the eldest one, who sought safety, is called Salm; the next, who did not shrink from a fight, is Tur; and the third, most sensible son is named Iraj.

93 *Faridun Receives a Message from Salm and Tur*

Folio 44v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Faridun divides his kingdom among his sons. Salm receives Rum, the Byzantine empire; Tur rules Central Asia and China, a land known as Turan; and to Iraj falls Iran. In their distant dominions Salm and Tur grow envious of Iraj and, plotting, send a messenger to threaten Faridun with war unless Iraj is also sent abroad.

94 *Faridun Replies to the Threat of Salm and Tur*

Folio 45v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn ʻAli
Private collection

The message from Salm and Tur dismays Faridun, who warns them not to turn to violence.

95 *Iraj Offers to Visit His Brothers*

Folio 46v
Attributed to ʻAbd al-Vahhab and ʻAbd al-ʻAziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In response to his brothers' threat, Iraj undertakes to visit them, without an army, to express his desire to live in peace. Faridun gives him a letter to carry to his brothers in which the shah reiterates his own peaceable intention.

96 *Iraj Begs Tur for Mercy*

Folio 47v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Iraj's demonstration of conciliation only enrages his brothers. When he reaches their tent, Tur jumps up from his golden seat, seizes it, and brings it crashing down on the head of Iraj, who beseeches his brothers to spare his life, keeping God and their familial bonds in mind.

97 *Tur Decapitates Iraj*

Folio 48v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad
Cincinnati Art Museum, The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial (1985.87)

Tur responds by drawing his dagger and stabbing Iraj. He then beheads his young brother and sends the head wrapped in scented cloth to Faridun.

98 *The Lamentation of Faridun*

Folio 49v
Attributed to ʻAbd al-ʻAziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Faridun's joy at his son's homecoming turns to sorrow when he sees the head of Iraj. In his grief he rips his clothes and tears out his hair. Placing Iraj's head in his lap, he prays to live long enough to see a descendant of Iraj avenge his death.

99 *Manuchihr at the Court of Faridun*

Folio 50v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Iraj is survived by a daughter, born after his death. When she reaches maturity, she marries a cousin of Faridun and bears a son, Manuchihr. When the child comes of age, Faridun places him on a golden throne, assembles all the notables of the kingdom to pay him homage, and announces that he will lead the campaign against his grandfather's murderers.

100 *Faridun and Manuchihr Receive an Envoy from Salm and Tur*

Folio 51v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Receiving word of Manuchihr's expanded role, Salm and Tur send an envoy laden with gifts to seek Faridun's forgiveness and ask Manuchihr to visit so they can serve him. From his throne with Manuchihr at his side, Faridun rejects this overture and vows to avenge Iraj's death with the brothers' blood.

101 *The Envoy Returns to Salm and Tur*

Folio 52v
Attributed to ʻAbd al-ʻAziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The envoy speeds back to Salm and Tur's encampment, terrified by the words of Faridun and fearful of having to relate Faridun's response to his masters.

102 *Salm and Tur Receive the Reply of Faridun and Manuchihr*

Folio 53v
Attributed to ʻAbd al-ʻAziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00495)

Blanching at the envoy's news of Faridun's message and of the regal bearing of Manuchihr, Salm and Tur resolve to muster their army and prepare for war immediately.

103 *Tur Taunts Qubad*

Folio 54v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When the army of Salm and Tur has crossed the Oxus River, Faridun sends Manuchihr at the head of a powerful force to meet them. With the battle lines drawn, Qubad, son of Kava, leads the Iranian vanguard. Before the battle can begin, Tur rides forth and questions Manuchihr's right to the Iranian throne. Qubad agrees to deliver the message.

104 *Manuchihr Raises Tur on His Lance*

Folio 55v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Several skirmishes ensue, and then Tur and Salm launch a night attack. Manuchihr's scouts learn of the plan and counter the strike, forcing Tur to flee. However, Manuchihr catches him, using his sword to lift him from his saddle before beheading him.

105 *Faridun Receives the Head of Tur*

Folio 56v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Manuchihr dispatches a camel bearing the head of Tur so that Faridun can learn of his victory without delay. Although the loss of his son is bittersweet, Faridun praises Manuchihr.

106 *Qaran Captures the Castle of the Alans*

Folio 57v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

To prevent Salm from sheltering in his impenetrable castle, Manuchihr sends the courtier Qaran, disguised as a Turanian, with the official seal taken from the defeated Tur. Qaran relieves the gatekeeper and summons the Iranian army, which storms the castle and burns it to the ground.

107 *Manuchihr Kills Salm*

Folio 58v
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In his final decisive battle against Salm, Manuchihr advances until he discovers Salm retreating. He slices off Salm's head, and as his soldiers mount it on a pike, Salm's army surrenders and is granted clemency.

108 *Faridun Embraces Manuchihr*

Folio 59v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.5)

Now that the war is over, Manuchihr's army gathers all the booty from Rum and Turan and loads it onto elephants before setting out for Iran. Meanwhile, Faridun assembles a host of men blowing horns, beating drums, and driving richly caparisoned elephants to the place where he and Manuchihr meet and embrace.

109 *Manuchihr Enthroned*

Folio 60v
Signed by Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Farjam Collection, Dubai

After a reign of five hundred years, Faridun abdicates in favor of Manuchihr. The old king dies, and after a period of mourning, Manuchihr assumes the throne, crowns himself, and announces his adherence to the beliefs and principles of Faridun.

110 *The Birth of Zal*

Folio 61v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Sam, Manuchihr's former guardian, becomes a father long after the first blush of youth has passed. The child, Zal, is an albino, thought to be a bad omen, and none of the women of Sam's house will allow him to see the child for a week. When he finally is shown the baby, Sam orders him to be carried off to Mount Alburz and left to die.

111 *Zal Is Sighted by a Caravan*

Folio 62v
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
The Art and History Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (LTS1995.2.46)

Hearing Zal's cries in the wilderness, a magical simurgh scoops him up in her claws and carries him to her nest high in the mountains, where she raises him with her own young. On occasion a caravan passes, and travelers notice Zal in the simurgh's nest.

112 *Sam Comes to Mount Alburz*

Folio 63v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Word of the child on Mount Alburz reaches Sam and, prompted by a dream, he goes to the mountain to search for his son. Looking up at the simurgh's nest, he spies Zal but cannot climb up to reach him. The simurgh reluctantly brings Zal to his father, giving the boy a feather to burn when he needs the simurgh's help.

113 *Sam Returns with Zal*

Folio 64v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
The Ebrahimi Family Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (ELS2010.7.2)

After gazing at his newly rediscovered son and recognizing his noble qualities, Sam has him dressed in royal raiment and leads him home in a procession.

114 *Zal before Manuchihr, Sam, and Qaran*

Folio 65v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When Manuchihr hears of the reunion of Sam and Zal, he invites them to court. Enthroned next to his courtier Qaran and son Nauzar, Manuchihr observes Zal in wonder and understands that Zal will become a great paladin.

115 *Sam Takes Leave of Zal*

Folio 66v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Although Sam and Zal return to Zabulistan, their kingdom in the east, Manuchihr summons Sam to a war in Mazandaran. Sam thus entrusts Zal with the rule of the kingdom with the help of the local elders and wise men.

116 *Zal Receives Mihrab's Homage at Kabul*

Folio 67v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir
Collection unknown

On a tour of his territories, Zal visits Kabul, where he entertains Mihrab, the local king and a descendant of Zahhak. Mihrab presents many gifts, but Zal is most intrigued by the description of Mihrab's beautiful daughter.

117 *Mihrab Describes Zal to Sindukht and Rudaba*

Folio 68v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Returning home, Mihrab visits the harem, where he tells his wife, Sindukht, and daughter, Rudaba, about Zal, describing his strength, fairness, and generosity as well as his white hair. Rudaba blushes to consider this newly discovered prince.

118 *Rudaba Confides in Her Maids*

Folio 69v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Unable to keep her passion to herself, Rudaba confesses her love for Zal to her Turkish maids. At first they react negatively, wondering how she can love a white haired youth reared by a bird. However, seeing her anger at their response, they determine to help her meet Zal.

119 *Rudaba's Maids Meet Zal's Page at the River*

Folio 70v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Rudaba's maids go to the riverbank near Zal's camp. Zal sends his page to collect a bird he has shot, which lies dead near the girls, but also to determine why they are there. They explain their mission to the page, who informs Zal in due course.

120 *Rudaba's Maids Return to the Palace*

Folio 71v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz with Qadimi and Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.6)

Rudaba's maids hurry back to her palace, where they are chided by a guard for staying out so late. They respond that they have been picking flowers, then regale their mistress with stories of Zal's qualities.

121 *Rudaba Makes a Ladder of Her Tresses*

Folio 72v
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.7)

One of Rudaba's maids sneaks Zal through the palace to the princess's pavilion. Although Rudaba lowers her tresses for him to scale the wall, Zal tosses up his lasso to catch the crenellation at the roof, then climbs up to meet his beloved.

122 *Zal Consults the Magi*

Folio 73v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.8)

Filled with joy after his night with Rudaba, Zal summons his magi and confesses his newfound passion. When he asks their opinion, they first remain silent, worrying about Sam and Manuchihr's reaction to the union of Zal and a descendant of Zahhak. They advise him to write a judicious letter to Sam, who can correspond with the shah on Zal's behalf.

123 *Zal Dictates a Letter to Sam about Rudaba*

Folio 74v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Zal calls a scribe and dictates a letter to Sam disclosing his love for Rudaba and asking his father's permission to wed. He reminds Sam of the oath he made upon retrieving Zal from the simurgh's nest to grant his every wish. Dismayed with his son's choice, Sam asks his astrologers, who foretell a son of Zal and Rudaba who will save Iran from the Turanians.

124 *Rudaba Confesses to Sindukht*

Folio 76v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After noticing the comings and goings of the woman who delivers the message that Sam consents to Zal and Rudaba's marriage, Sindukht falls into a fury, expecting the worst of her daughter. Then Rudaba confesses her love for Zal and announces that Sam has agreed to their union. Sindukht relents and begins plotting how to tell Mihrab and Manuchihr.

125 *Mihrab Hears of Rudaba's Folly*

Folio 77v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Sultan Muhammad
Private collection

Mihrab comes to Sindukht's chamber, where she speaks poetically of death and the passage of time. She then tells him that Rudaba has lost her heart to Zal, prompting Mihrab to threaten to kill his daughter. Sindukht manages to calm him, but Mihrab worries that Manuchihr will never consent to this marriage.

126 *Rudaba before Mihrab*

Folio 78v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After more coaxing, Sindukht convinces Mihrab to see Rudaba, whom she has advised to come weeping to her father dressed in her finest raiment. Although he is stunned by her beauty, Mihrab sternly chides Rudaba for her choice.

127 *Sam Is Visited by Prince Nauzar*

Folio 79v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When word reaches Manuchihr that Sam and Mihrab have consented to their children's marriage, he summons the magi, but they simply note his superior wisdom. He then sends Prince Nauzar to bring Sam back to his court. First, Sam and Nauzar enjoy a feast in Sam's encampment.

128 *Manuchihr Welcomes Sam but Orders War upon Mihrab*

Folio 80v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.9)

Following his arrival at the imperial court, Sam recounts his military victories and is feted by Manuchihr. The next day Manuchihr refuses to speak of Rudaba and Zal and instead orders Sam to set out immediately on a mission to attack and destroy Mihrab's palace and the surrounding city of Kabul.

129 *Zal Questions Sam's Intentions Regarding the House of Mihrab*

Folio 81v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.10)

As word spreads to Kabul that Sam will soon be waging war against Mihrab, Zal decides to fight to defend Rudaba and her father. He returns to meet with Sam, determined to win him over. After Zal reminds Sam of his broken promise, Sam hatches a plan. He will write a letter for Zal to deliver to Manuchihr. Seeing Zal in person will cause the shah to relent.

130 *"One Blow" Sam Recounts How He Slew a Dragon*

Folio 82v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In his letter to Manuchihr, Sam reminds the shah of his many battles against *divs* in the service of Iran. He retells the story of his battle with the dragon of the River Kashaf, "as large as a mountain." After shooting arrows into the dragon's maw, Sam bashed its skull with his ox head mace. This feat earned him the name "One Blow" Sam.

131 *Mihrab Vents His Anger upon Sindukht*

Folio 83v
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.11)

Anxious about the impending attack of the shah's forces, led by Sam, Mihrab summons Sindukht and tells her the only thing that will avert the ruin of Kabul is the public execution of Rudaba and herself. She replies that this can be averted if she goes to Sam with riches from Mihrab's treasury as a peace offering.

132 *Sindukht Comes to Sam Bearing Gifts*

Folio 84v
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-Vahhab
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00496)

Sindukht, in the guise of Mihrab's ambassadress, meets with Sam. The retinue bearing her gift of horses, elephants, silks, gold coins, slaves, and gems stretches for two miles. Considering Sindukht's offer, Sam decides that the only way to avoid the wrath of Manuchihr or Zal is to entrust the riches to Zal's treasurer, to be held in trust for Rudaba. At this good news Sindukht's companions bring bowls of rubies to pile before Sam.

133 *Sam Seals His Pact with Sindukht*

Folio 85v
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.12)

Although Sam is still ignorant of Sindukht's identity, he asks her probing questions about herself and Rudaba. She refuses to answer until Sam has promised to ensure her safety and that of her family, no matter what happens to Kabul. He takes her hand to seal the vow, and she tells him her true identity.

134 *The Shah's Wise Men Approve of Zal's Marriage*

Folio 86v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.13)

Zal arrives at the court of Manuchihr and eventually is given an audience, where the shah treats him with civility but still withholds his blessing. Next, Manuchihr meets his learned advisers, who come to the same conclusion as Sam's sages: the child of Zal and Rudaba will be the greatest of all Iranian heroes.

135 *Zal Expounds the Mysteries of the Magi*

Folio 87v
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.14)

Before granting Zal permission to wed, Manuchihr arranges a series of tests to be administered by his magi. Each sage presents a riddle in the form of a metaphor, but Zal is able to interpret each one correctly. After Zal's success Manuchihr orders a banquet in the young man's honor and consents to his marriage to Rudaba.

136 *Sam and Zal Welcomed into Kabul*

Folio 89v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

Zal returns to Zabulistan with news of Manuchihr's permission for him to wed. He and Sam proceed toward Kabul and are met on the way by Mihrab with a large retinue. At Mihrab's palace Sindukht greets the men along with three hundred servants holding cups of gold filled with gems and incense.

137 *Rustam Slays the White Elephant*

Folio 92v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Nine months after marrying Zal, Rudaba gives birth by Caesarean section to an enormous son named Rustam. As a boy, Rustam is awakened by a commotion and learns that the king's white elephant is running amok. He grabs Sam's mace, throws the gatekeepers aside, and smashes the elephant on the head, stopping it in its tracks.

138 *Shah Nauzar Embraces Sam*

Folio 96v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Before his death Manuchihr advises his son Nauzar that trouble lies ahead in the form of threats from the Turanians, and that Sam, Zal, and Rustam will help him overcome his enemies. Nauzar inherits the throne but quickly antagonizes his advisers and subjects. To stave off a rebellion, he summons Sam. When the old paladin arrives, Nauzar embraces him and swears to take his advice and to rule justly.

139 *The First Clash with the Invading Turanians*

Folio 98v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

With the death of Manuchihr and Sam, the Turanians decide that the chance for victory against their perennial enemies has arrived. They muster a vast army, which is matched by that of Nauzar. Before the war can begin, the advance guard of both sides meet and engage in battle.

140 *Barman Slays Old Qubad*

Folio 100r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As the Iranian and Turanian armies mass on the Plain of Dahistan, neither side makes the first move until Barman, a young cousin of Afrasiyab of Turan, charges up to the Iranian front. Only one soldier responds to his challenge to fight. Qubad, chief paladin before Zal and Rustam, seizes his lance and rushes at Barman. After dueling for many hours, Barman prevails, and Qubad falls to his death.

141 *Qaran Slays Barman*

Folio 102v
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad assisted by Mir Sayyid 'Ali
Private collection

Several battles follow the death of Qubad, each one successively worse. Eventually, the Iranians flee to a castle, where the Turanians besiege them. In defiance of Shah Nauzar, Qaran, the commander of the Iranian army and Qubad's brother, and a group of like-minded troops sneak out of their fortress to rescue their families in Iran. However, they encounter Barman, the murderer of Qubad. Qaran gives chase until he spears the Turanian and beheads him.

142 *Zal Slays Khazarvan*

Folio 104r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.15)

While Afrasiyab fights at Dahistan, a supplementary force is detailed to attack Zabul, home of Zal, of which Mihrab has been left in charge. Through bribery and persuasion, he keeps the Turanians at bay. An urgent message reaches Zal, who returns immediately with his army. He soon dispatches Khazarvan, one of the Turanian commanders, by smashing him on the head with his ox-head mace, then trampling him to death.

143 *Afrasiyab on the Iranian Throne*

Folio 105r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.16)

Back in Dahistan the Turanians defeat the Iranians and take Shah Nauzar prisoner. With news of the Turanian rout in Zabul, Afrasiyab pillories Nauzar and beheads him. The Turanians march across Iran, and Afrasiyab sits on the throne. With this victory come the vast riches of the Iranian treasury, which servants parade before him. One year later famine descends on Iran and Turan, and the two enemies are forced to agree to an armistice.

144 *Rustam Lassoes Rakhsh*

Folio 109r
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Art and History Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (LTS1995.2.47)

Two shahs, Zav and Garshasp, succeed Nauzar, but neither reign lasts long, and no new shah is appointed after them. Zal continues as chief paladin but is blamed for the adversity Iran has suffered. Zal agrees and suggests that Rustam, his son, join him at the head of the army. First, Rustam has to find a suitable horse. In the herds of Zabul is a bay called Rakhsh that has never been caught. Rustam lassoes him and finds his mount for life.

145 *Rustam Finds Kay Qubad*

Folio 110v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Private collection

With Rustam at his side, Zal sets out to find a new shah, someone with the kingly aura denoting the true heir to the Iranian throne. On the advice of the magi, Zal and Rustam head for Mount Alburz, where Kay Qubad, a descendant of Faridun, lives. At the foot of the mountain, Rustam enters a clearing in which he finds a magnificent youth seated on a throne. This is Kay Qubad, who has dreamed that a white falcon—Rustam—will bring him forth to lead Iran.

146 *Rustam Spits Qalun on His Own Spear*

Folio 111v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Traveling to join Zal and the Iranian army, Rustam and Kay Qubad encounter a band of Turanian soldiers. Qalun, a Turanian officer, launches himself at Rustam, who charges forward. Qalun then sticks Rustam with his lance, but Rustam jerks it out of his hand and spears him. He lifts Qalun and sticks the lance in the ground, with Qalun impaled as if on a spit.

147 *Rustam's First Encounter with Afrasiyab*

Folio 112v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Now that the Iranians have a new shah, they are ready to revive the battle. Rustam spies Afrasiyab and charges at him, grabbing him by the belt and lifting him into the air. But victory is not to be, for the belt snaps. The Turanians rush to protect the fallen warrior and spirit him away from the battlefield. The Turanians flee and eventually sue for peace, which restores the borders of Iran to those defined by Faridun.

148 *Rustam's First Course: Rakhsh Slays a Lion*

Folio 118r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Art and History Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (LTS1995.2.48)

After ruling for one hundred years, Kay Qubad dies and is succeeded by his son, Kay Kavus, a foolhardy youth. Kay Kavus sets off on an expedition to Mazandaran, home of *divs* who eventually capture and blind him. A message reaches Rustam, and he embarks on a rescue mission on the shorter but more dangerous route—the scene of his seven "courses," or challenges. After two days riding, Rustam lies down to sleep in a meadow, not realizing it is a lion's den. The lion returns and attacks the horse Rakhsh, who crunches the lion's neck with his teeth and tramples it. Rustam wakes and chides his horse for taking on the lion.

149 *Rustam's Third Course: He Slays a Dragon*

Folio 119v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

After crossing a desert and finding water and game, Rustam again lies down to sleep. This time a dragon appears, visible only to Rakhsh. Twice the horse whinnies to warn his master, and twice Rustam berates Rakhsh for waking him. The third time, the dragon roars, and Rakhsh and Rustam attack, biting the beast's neck and slicing off its head, respectively.

150 *Rustam's Fourth Course: He Cleaves a Witch*

Folio 120v
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.17)

Rustam's next camp features a stream with wine, roasted meat, and a lute laid out next to it. Rustam dismounts, makes himself comfortable, and begins to strum the lute and sing. Soon a comely young woman appears and joins him. When Rustam thanks God for his blessings, her face turns black, revealing her to be a *div*. Quickly Rustam lassoes her and then stabs her with his sword.

151 *Rustam's Fifth Course: The Capture of Aulad*

Folio 121v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Rustam lies down to sleep in a meadow and releases Rakhsh to graze in a field of grain. A watchman interrupts his nap, complaining about the horse in his master's field. Rustam attacks him, and when the owner's other attendants come to help, he slays them. The master, Aulad, is roped and bound and told to lead Rustam to the White Div, who holds Kay Kavus captive in Mazandaran.

152 *Rustam's Sixth Course: He Slays Arzhang*

Folio 122v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Once over the Mazandaran border, Rustam bellows a challenge to Arzhang, the chief *div*. Out bounds the demon to clash with Rustam, but before he knows it, Rustam has twisted Arzhang's head off his neck and thrown it at the *div*'s sidekicks.

153 *Kay Kavus and Rustam Embrace*

Folio 123r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.18)

Aulad now leads Rustam to the captive Kay Kavus and his contingent, all of whom have been blinded. The shah embraces Rustam, then advises him to find the White Div before he is discovered, to do him in, and to bring his blood to drip into the eyes of the Iranians to restore their sight.

154 *Rustam's Seventh Course: He Kills the White Div*

Folio 124r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
The Cleveland Museum of Art

With Aulad's help Rustam finds the White Div's cave but waits until the demon is asleep before proceeding. The *div* wakes and attacks Rustam, but finally Rustam lifts him up and hurls him to the floor. He cuts out the White Div's liver and, returning to the shah, restores his sight with the demon's blood.

155 *Rustam Brings the Div King to Kay Kavus for Execution*

Folio 127v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.19)

Even with the death of the White Div and the Div General Arzhang, the demons of the Div King of Mazandaran continue to harry the Iranians. At last, Kay Kavus leads his army into battle against the *divs*. Rustam captures the Div King, who transforms himself into a stone. When Rustam lugs him to Kay Kavus and threatens to slice him up, he returns to *div* form and is executed on Kay Kavus's order. [A later hand blackened the face and hands of Kay Kavus.]

156 *The Marriage of Sudaba and Kay Kavus*

Folio 130r
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.20)

After defeating the king of Hamavaran, Kay Kavus demands his daughter Sudaba's hand in marriage. Her beauty astonishes him, and his advisers agree that she is a perfect match for him. They marry and begin a weeklong celebration. However, Sudaba's father then lures Kay Kavus to his palace and, after eight days of revelry, takes him and his men prisoner.

157 *Kay Kavus Ascends to the Sky*

Folio 134r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.31.21)

Resentful of working for Kay Kavus, the *divs* devise a plan to free themselves. They tell the shah that he can rule heaven and earth. Kay Kavus is inspired by this notion and orders the construction of a special throne with poles from which he suspends legs of lamb. Four eagles tethered below flap their wings to reach the meat, lifting the throne into the sky. Soon the birds tire, and the throne falls to earth.

158 *Rustam and the Seven Champions of Iran Hunt in Turan*

Folio 135v
Attributed to Mir Sayyid 'Ali
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

At a feast with the Seven Champions, Rustam proposes a hunt on Afrasiyab's land. After a week of the Iranians slaughtering all manner of prey, followed by feasting and wine, Afrasiyab gets wind of the trespassers and gathers a huge army to attack them.

159 *Pilsam Fights Four of the Seven Champions*

Folio 138r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The forces of Afrasiyab vastly outnumber Rustam and the champions, but the Iranians bravely scatter hundreds of their foe. Then Afrasiyab dispatches Pilsam, a mighty warrior, who parries the blows of four champions. Undeterred, they regroup and rout the Turanians.

160 *Suhrab Ropes in His Steed*

Folio 141r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

On a hunting expedition Rustam crosses into Turan in search of Rakhsh, whom he thinks is lost. As a guest in the castle of a vassal king, Rustam is unexpectedly joined in his bedchamber by the king's beautiful daughter, Tahmina. The next day, before Rustam departs, they marry, and nine months later Tahmina gives birth to a son, Suhrab. Eventually she tells him the identity of his father, and Suhrab, believing he is bound for glory, demands a suitable horse. He chooses one from the line of Rakhsh, who had enjoyed equine love the same night as his master.

161 *Suhrab Meets Gurdafarid*

Folio 143r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Suhrab devises a plan to invade Iran with an army, defeat Kay Kavus, and put Rustam on the throne. Afrasiyab, who knows Suhrab's true identity, supports the plan and orders his generals to ensure that Suhrab and Rustam do not recognize each other. Within Iran Suhrab attacks the White Castle, home of a very old paladin. His daughter, Gurdafarid, challenges the Turanians, and Suhrab accepts. As he spears her with his lance, she slices it in two with her sword.

162 *Rustam Pained before Kay Kavus*

Folio 146r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.22)

Kay Kavus is sufficiently worried about the new Turanian threat that he sends the knight Giv to summon Rustam and prepare for war. Rustam dismisses the urgency of the request and delays his departure. Finally, when he and Giv appear before Kay Kavus, the shah harangues them both, and Rustam leaves in a fit of pique. Eventually the paladins intervene, and Rustam returns to offer his obeisance to Kay Kavus.

163 *Rustam and Suhrab in Battle: The First Day*

Folio 151v
Attributed to Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As the Iranian army masses before the White Castle, Suhrab charges the shah's tent. Only Rustam, not knowing Suhrab's identity, accepts his challenge. The combat that ensues lasts all day but ends in a draw. With the armies thus engaged, Rustam rides off in pursuit of the Turanians, and Suhrab gallops in the direction of the Iranians.

164 *Suhrab Gains the Upper Hand: The Second Day*

Folio 153v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Rustam continues to conceal his identity from Suhrab and imagines his son to be safe with his mother. Thus, they again fight all through the day until Suhrab lifts Rustam by the belt and throws him to the ground. When Suhrab draws his dagger, Rustam says that the rules of wrestling require him to be thrown down twice before the coup de grâce can be dealt. Suhrab believes him, and they agree to resume the next day.

165 *Rustam Weeps over His Dying Son: The Third Day*

Folio 155r
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

On the third day Suhrab and Rustam wrestle again, but this time Rustam throws the youth to the ground and stabs him. As he lies dying, Suhrab says that he had come seeking Rustam but now someone else had killed him. Rustam then identifies himself and, tearing off Suhrab's coat of mail, finds the onyx armband he had given Tahmina the night of their marriage. Understanding fully the tragedy of his deed, Rustam weeps bitterly.

166 *Lamentation for Suhrab*

Folio 156v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Rustam's grief knows no limits. Weeping as he gazes upon his dead son, he tears at his clothes and mourns the loss of such an exceptional young man. After burning Suhrab's tents, Rustam prepares to take his body back to Zabulistan for burial.

167 *Siyavush Stands Accused by Sudaba before Kay Kavus*

Folio 163v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.23)

Kay Kavus marries a second wife, a Turanian princess, who gives birth to a son, Siyavush. Because the boy has an ill-omened horoscope, Kay Kavus sends him to be reared by Rustam in Zabulistan, but when he comes of age, he returns to his father's court. Soon afterward his mother dies, and Kay Kavus recommends that Siyavush seek solace with his first wife, Sudaba. She falls in love with Siyavush, and when he spurns her advances, she claims that he tried to rape her. Kay Kavus questions his wife and son and determines the innocence of Siyavush, but decides the matter should be kept secret.

168 *Sudaba's Second Accusation against Siyavush Is Judged*

Folio 164v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.24)

Sudaba gets hold of stillborn twins, claiming they were the result of her rape by Siyavush and that their miscarriage was brought about by her distress. Kay Kavus now summons his astrologers, but they rule that the twins could not be children of Kay Kavus or Sudaba. She accuses the astrologers of lying in fear of punishment from Siyavush and Rustam.

169 *The Fire Trial of Siyavush*

Folio 166r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

To put the matter of Siyavush's innocence to rest, Kay Kavus orders a trial by fire. Mounted on his horse Bihzad, Siyavush rides into a bonfire. Onlookers wail and worry, but the prince emerges unscathed. To express his joy, Kay Kavus orders a grand feast. He also orders the execution of Sudaba but then rescinds the command at the behest of Siyavush.

170 *Siyavush and Rustam Capture Balkh*

Folio 168v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Afrasiyab once again musters an army and attacks the Iranians, seizing the fortress at Balkh. Siyavush now joins forces with Rustam and marches on Balkh. On the third day of the battle, Siyavush leads the assault on the fortress, and when no reinforcements arrive, the Turanians abandon their positions and flee.

171 *Afrasiyab Announces the New Policy of Peace with Iran*

Folio 170v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Following the defeat at Balkh, Afrasiyab, now king of Turan, has a nightmare in which his army is defeated by the Iranians and he is split in two by the son of Kay Kavus. Although his brothers try to comfort him, the astrologers confirm his worst fears. As a result, he sues for peace with Iran and holds back his army from attacking the forces of Siyavush.

172 *Siyavush Receives Gifts from Afrasiyab's Peace Envoy*

Folio 171v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Afrasiyab dispatches his brother Garsivaz to Balkh to seek peace from Siyavush and Rustam. He comes bearing lavish gifts of Arabian horses, rich textiles, and slaves. Rustam is suspicious and counsels a delay before accepting the Turanian terms. However, the next day Garsivaz promises one hundred hostages from the Turanian royal family and the return of all frontier lands claimed by Iran.

173 *Kay Kavus Upbraids Siyavush in a Letter*

Folio 174r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.25)

When Rustam brings news of the peace to Kay Kavus, the shah refuses to believe the gesture is in good faith. He relieves Rustam of his command of the army and appoints Tus in his place. Kay Kavus drafts a furious letter to Siyavush, accusing his son of laziness and of scheming with Rustam to overthrow him. He urges Siyavush to recommence war with Turan. Rustam returns to Zabulistan, washing his hands of Kay Kavus.

174 *Siyavush Takes Counsel with Zanga and Bahram*

Folio 175v
Attributed to Qadimi and Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In the absence of Rustam, Siyavush turns to Zanga and Bahram for advice. With no appetite for war himself, he asks Zanga to return the hostages and gifts to Afrasiyab, and Bahram to take command of the Iranian army until the arrival of Tus. Siyavush, meanwhile, finds a quiet corner where he can retire from the world. Despite the remonstrations of Zanga and Bahram to follow the orders of Kay Kavus, Siyavush will not change his mind.

175 *Piran Respectfully Welcomes Siyavush to Turan*

Folio 178r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Afrasiyab is perturbed at the prospect of renewed hostilities with the Iranians. However, the aged paladin Piran advises him to invite Siyavush to take refuge at his court in Turan. The letter convinces Siyavush, and he soon arrives with a small party of warriors. Piran greets him with great fanfare, promising that he will be treated like a son by Afrasiyab. Kay Kavus, meanwhile, withdraws his forces, shamed by his son's actions.

176 *Afrasiyab and Siyavush Embrace*

Folio 179r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Mir Musavvir
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art (2002.50.13)

When Siyavush and Piran reach Afrasiyab's castle at Gang, the Turanian king greets and embraces Siyavush. Promising peace, Afrasiyab declares he will treat Siyavush as a son. Numerous banquets and other festivities ensue, and Siyavush's memory of Iran dims.

177 *Siyavush Plays Polo before Afrasiyab*

Folio 180v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.26)

Afrasiyab proposes a polo match with Siyavush on one side and himself on the other. Siyavush twice hits the ball farther than anyone has ever seen. Afrasiyab then retires from the match, leaving the Turanians to contend ever more fiercely with the Iranian team. Eventually the game is called off to avoid its turning violent.

178 *Siyavush Hits the Mark*

Folio 181v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After the polo match Afrasiyab asks Siyavush to show him his bow. It is so large and thick that even Garsivaz is unable to bend it for stringing. Siyavush, however, strings it with ease and then, at Afrasiyab's request, shoots a bull's-eye three times in a row. In honor of these feats, Afrasiyab orders a banquet and sumptuous gifts for Siyavush.

179 *Siyavush and Afrasiyab in the Hunting Field*

Folio 182v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Private collection

Soon after his polo and archery demonstrations, Siyavush joins Afrasiyab and his men at the hunt. Without delay Siyavush slices an onager in two and amasses a huge pile of slaughtered game. His success sets off a chain of grumbling among the Turanian worthies, but Afrasiyab is unaware of their discontent and showers Siyavush with the favor that his brother Garsivaz and son Jahn once enjoyed.

180 *Siyavush and Jarira Wedded*

Folio 183v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.27)

Claiming that his compatriots had spurned Siyavush, Piran offers him his daughter Jarira in marriage. Elegantly clothed and perfumed, she is presented to the young prince, who weds her happily.

181 *Siyavush and Farangis Wedded*

Folio 185v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.28)

Piran proposes that Siyavush take Afrasiyab's daughter Farangis as his second wife. Siyavush agrees but Afrasiyab resists, worried that this union will manifest the prophesy that his grandson will overthrow him. When Piran persists, asserting that the marriage will end the hostilities between the two perennial enemies, Afrasiyab relents. To strains of music, Siyavush and Farangis enjoy their marital bed for a fortnight.

182 *Piran Visits Siyavushgird*

Folio 188v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Together with his two wives, Jarira and Farangis, Siyavush founds a new city in the farthest eastern reaches of Turan. However, Afrasiyab misses him and Farangis and requests that they move closer to the capital. Siyavush consents and builds another city, Siyavushgird. Piran happens to be on a mission nearby and pays a visit to the magnificent city.

183 *Garsivaz Visits Siyavushgird*

Folio 189v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Piran's glowing report of Siyavushgird stirs suspicions in Afrasiyab. He thus sends Garsivaz to determine whether Siyavush and his men are still loyal to him. Garsivaz receives a warm welcome at a grand banquet, but news of the birth of a son to Siyavush by Jarira breeds jealousy, which Garsivaz keeps to himself.

184 *The Prowess of Siyavush Vexes Garsivaz*

Folio 190v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The next day, after a game of polo in which Siyavush once again bests Garsivaz, Siyavush puts on a display of horsemanship. Five coats of mail are joined together and placed as a target toward which Siyavush tilts, lance in hand. He pierces the mail and lifts it on high in one sweep of the lance. This and other feats only anger Garsivaz further. On his return he reports to Afrasiyab that Siyavush is mounting an army against Turan in an alliance with Iran, Chin, and Rum.

185 *Siyavush Recounts His Nightmare to Farangis*

Folio 195r
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.29)

Afrasiyab now believes that Siyavush is conspiring against him, and Siyavush thinks that Afrasiyab is setting a trap for him. His tension growing, Siyavush wakes from a nightmare in which his city is engulfed in flames and Afrasiyab is pushing him into the fire. While he thinks it foreshadows his own death, Farangis suggests that it signifies the end of Garsivaz.

186 *The Murder of Siyavush*

Folio 198r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Afrasiyab mobilizes his army and marches on Siyavushgird. Knowing his fate is nigh, he bids Farangis farewell, burns his palace, and sets out with his band of Iranians. Although Siyavush tries to speak to Afrasiyab, the Turanians charge and kill his men. Wounded, Siyavush is dragged by Guruy to the field of Siyavushgird, where the Turanian slits the Persian's throat, saving his blood in a bowl to be poured on the barren land after his death.

187 *Piran and Kay Khusrau before Afrasiyab*

Folio 201r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Before he dies Siyavush discovers that Farangis is pregnant, and in due course a son, Kay Khusrau, is born. When Afrasiyab learns of the news, he orders the boy reared by shepherds to ensure his ignorance of his lineage. Kay Khusrau returns to Piran's house at age ten, and the king begins to worry about being overthrown by this grandson. A meeting is scheduled, and on Piran's advice, Kay Khusrau acts like an idiot, a ploy that saves him.

188 *Rustam Blames Kay Kavus for the Slaying of Siyavush*

Folio 202v
Attributed to Qadimi directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.30)

The news of the death of Siyavush causes lamentation at the Iranian court and in Zabulistan, where Rustam swears to avenge his murder. After a period of mourning, Rustam journeys with his army to the court of Kay Kavus. First, he reproaches the shah for listening to Sudaba and allowing Siyavush to go to Turan. Next, he drags Sudaba out of her chambers and stabs her to death. After seven days of mourning, he issues the call to battle and departs with the army for Turan.

189 *Surkha, Captured by Faramarz, Is Condemned by Rustam*

Folio 204v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.31)

The first engagement of Iranian and Turanian troops takes place at Ispanjab, where the Iranian vanguard, led by Faramarz, Rustam's son, slays the local vassal king. Next, Afrasiyab's favorite son, Surkha, rushes in ahead of his thirty thousand soldiers, but Faramarz takes him prisoner. When Rustam arrives, he insists that Surkha be killed. Faramarz obliges.

190 *Human Diverts Rustam from Afrasiyab*

Folio 206v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As the battle develops, part of the Iranian front weakens. Rustam then pushes forward into Turanian lines and, spying Afrasiyab, spears his horse, causing the king to fall to the ground. Before Rustam can capture Afrasiyab, the Turanian Human comes from behind and crashes his mace down on Rustam's shoulder. Afrasiyab escapes, as does Human, but in the end the Turanian army retreats, and the Iranians carry the day.

191 *Kay Khusrau Is Discovered by Giv*

Folio 210v
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.310.32)

The angel Surush comes in a dream to the old Iranian paladin Gudarz to announce that his son Giv will find the next shah, named Kay Khusrau, who will replace Kay Kavus. For seven years Giv wanders Turan without hearing anything of Kay Khusrau. At the brink of despair, Giv comes upon a beautiful glade and in it a stately youth. Before he can speak, the youth welcomes him by name, and Giv knows he has found Kay Khusrau.

192 *Kay Khusrau Rides Bihzad for the First Time*

Folio 212r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.33)

Giv and Kay Khusrau travel to Siyavushgird to tell Farangis their plans. They first need to find Bihzad, Siyavush's mount, who has been allowed to run wild in the mountains since his master's death. When they find Bihzad, the horse allows Kay Khusrau, who is carrying his old saddle, to put it on and mount. The two take off, joined eventually by Giv, and they all return to prepare for their journey.

193 *Giv Drives off the Turanian Pursuers*

Folio 213r
Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The news of the escape of Kay Khusrau, Giv, and Farangis soon reaches Piran, who quickly gathers a force of three hundred men to pursue them. The trio eventually stops to rest, but Giv remains vigilant. Soon enough, the Turanian soldiers appear. Giv charges at them, slicing them with his sword and bashing them with his mace until they retreat.

194 *Piran, Captured by Giv, Is Freed by Kay Khusrau*

Folio 214v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Piran reacts to the bad news of his soldiers' defeat by raising an army three times as large to pursue the fugitives. As Giv and Kay Khusrau rest, Farangis spots Piran and his men at the edge of the River Gulzariyyun, across from their camp. Giv devises a plan to draw Piran across the river and take him prisoner. With the lasso around his neck, Piran is presented to Kay Khusrau and Farangis, who advise Giv, against his wishes, to release the prisoner.

195 *Kay Khusrau Crosses the River Jaihun with Giv and Farangis*

Folio 216v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Reaching the banks of the River Jaihun, beyond which lies Iran, Giv tries to engage a boatman to take him and his royal charges across to safety. The boatman asks an enormous price to which Giv responds that they will make their own way. They plunge into the river and, despite the weight of their armor, make it safely to the other side.

196 *Kay Khusrau Welcomed by Kay Kavus*

Folio 218r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
The David Collection, Copenhagen

Kay Khusrau, Giv, and Farangis proceed first to Isfahan, where Giv tells Gudarz the news that Kay Khusrau is the son of Siyavush. They then travel to the court of Kay Kavus, where they are greeted warmly by the shah. Seated beside his grandfather, Kay Khusrau recounts all the events from the time of his meeting with Afrasiyab until his escape to Iran. He praises Giv's bravery, for which Giv is richly rewarded by the shah.

197 *Kay Khusrau Takes the Castle of Bahman*

Folio 221r
Attributed to Qadimi
The David Collection, Copenhagen

Although prepared to abdicate, Kay Kavus cannot choose between his son Fariburz and his grandson Kay Khusrau to succeed him. He devises a contest whereby the two princes each try to take the *div* filled castle of Bahman. Fariburz's attempt to storm the castle fails when the ground bursts into flames. Kay Khusrau then approaches the castle, and Giv nails a letter to the wall announcing that the castle will belong to the rightful king. In an instant the walls tumble, and the *divs* fall to their deaths or are shot with arrows.

198 *Kay Khusrau Celebrates His Accession*

Folio 223r
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When Kay Khusrau returns, Kay Kavus leads him to the throne, and the treasurer brings forth the crown. Word reaches Zabulistan that Kay Kavus has abdicated. Zal, Rustam, and Rustam's sons rejoice and pay homage to the new shah.

199 *The Shah's War Prizes Are Pledged*

Folio 225v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.34)

In the presence of Kay Khusrau, Rustam, and Zal, Kay Kavus proclaims that the time has come to renew the war against Afrasiyab. Kay Kavus then spends eight days feasting and performing religious rituals. Afterward, he announces that, for those who achieve six feats of prowess, rewards will be offered, including gold coins, jewels, incense, and slaves. First, Giv pledges to set fire to a great wood barrier erected by Afrasiyab.

200 *Kay Khusrau Launches the War upon Turan*

Folio 226v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The Iranian army is assembled, and Kay Khusrau, atop a giant elephant, stands between the divisions. In his hand he holds a cup into which he drops a ball, signifying the start of the First War in the name of the murdered Siyavush. The shah reviews the troops of each clan, ending with the Sistanis, led by Rustam's son Faramarz. Rustam himself remains behind with the young shah.

201 *Farud Confronts the Iranians*

Folio 229v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

To avoid passing by the mountain castle of his half-brother, Farud, who lives there with his mother, Jarira, Kay Khusrau orders his army to march through the desert to Turan. Tus, the commander, dismisses this course of action and leads the army to the foot of the mountain. Farud observes their movements from a defile high above. While Farud recognizes each Iranian paladin, Tus does not know Farud, so he sends Bahram to find out who is spying on his army.

202 *Farud Humiliates the Iranians*

Folio 232v
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz and Mirza Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Bahram returns and announces that he has found Farud, but Tus derides Farud for not descending the mountain and agrees that his son Rivniz should fetch the prince. Distrusting Tus's intentions, Farud beheads Rivniz. The same fate befalls a second soldier. Then Tus himself rides toward the mountain, but Farud shoots the horse out from under him.

203 *Bizhan Forces Farud to Flee*

Folio 234r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Collection unknown

The Iranian Giv rides up the mountain, only to have his horse shot. When he returns to his men, his son Bizhan berates him and storms up the mountain. Though his horse is shot, he continues on foot until he can attack Farud's horse. The next day, Bizhan leads the Iranian army to the gates of Farud's fortress and sets a trap. When Farud rides out, the Iranian Ruhham springs out and slashes his horse with his sword, which Bizhan follows with a blow to the head with his mace. Farud barely makes it back to his fortress.

204 *The Iranians Mourn Farud and Jarira*

Folio 236r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz and Mirza Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.35)

Mortally wounded, Farud is brought to his throne by his mother, Jarira. After advising all the women in the fort to jump to their deaths, Jarira stabs herself and lies on top of her son to die. Iranian soldiers who mourn Farud enter his chamber and weep. When the commanders arrive, all of them vent their anger at Tus for having allowed such a sorrowful and avoidable tragedy to occur.

205 *Giv Burns Down the Barricade on the River Kasa*

Folio 238r
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz and Mirza Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Tus leads the Iranian army through mountains and inclement weather to the River Kasa, where the Turanians have constructed a high and massive barricade. Giv fords the river and shoots a flaming arrow into the wall of timber. It takes three weeks to burn to the ground, after which the Iranian army can proceed.

206 *Bizhan Takes Tazhav's Crown and Concubine*

Folio 239v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Soon the Iranians enter the territory of Tazhav, the son-in-law of Afrasiyab. Following a parley with Giv and Bizhan, Tazhav returns to his men and the battle begins. When two-thirds of the Turanian force is felled, Tazhav flees, with Bizhan in hot pursuit. First, Bizhan grabs Tazhav's crown off his head. Then, after Tazhav lifts up his concubine to ride with him, he lets her go, and Bizhan takes her for himself. Tazhav, however, rides on to the Turanian capital.

207 *The Besotted Iranian Camp Attacked by Night*

Folio 241r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.36)

Now that Tazhav has sounded the alarm, Piran, Afrasiyab's commander, rallies one hundred thousand troops. Before they can amass on the battlefield, news reaches them that the Iranian army is drunkenly celebrating the rout of Tazhav. Piran and thirty thousand men stage a surprise attack on the inebriated Iranians, decimating all but a third of their force in a bloody melee.

208 *Kay Khusrau Orders Tus Recalled*

Folio 242r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In the aftermath of this defeat, a messenger speeds to Kay Khusrau's court to report on the double misfortune of the death of Farud and the drunken rout of the Iranian army. Kay Khusrau dictates a furious letter to his uncle Fariburz, railing against Tus and removing him from his command, which will be taken over by Fariburz. Gudarz will advise on all matters, and his son Giv will ride in the vanguard of the army.

209 *The Battle of Pashan Begins*

Folio 243v
Designed by Aqa Mirak and painted by 'Abd al Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.37)

When Kay Khusrau's letter arrives, Tus and his clan depart, leaving Fariburz in command of the Iranian army. After a one-month truce, another battle ensues, with Giv on the right and Fariburz in the center. In due course the Turanians break through the center, and Fariburz is forced to retreat. Although the tide is turning against the Iranians, Giv and his men stay the course, determined to fight beneath the banner of Kava, the symbolic apron of the blacksmith who rebelled against the evil tyrant Zahhak.

210 *Bahram Recovers the Crown of Rivniz*

Folio 245r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.38)

As the battle of Pashan continues, the Iranians start to gain control, but then Prince Rivniz, one of the sons of Kay Kavus, is killed, and his crown falls to the ground of the battlefield. Both the Iranians and the Turanians turn their focus to retrieving the crown until Bahram, son of Gudarz, rushes into the fray and scoops up the crown with the tip of his lance. Although both sides suffer many losses, the Turanians finish victorious.

211 *Giv Avenges Bahram by Slaying Tazhav*

Folio 248r
Attributed to Qadimi
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.39)

In the aftermath of the battle, Bahram returns to the scene to find his lost whip and is mortally wounded by Tazhav and his army. Aggrieved, Giv rides close to the Turanian camp under cover of darkness and takes Tazhav prisoner. He returns to where Bahram lies dying and shows him his killer. Then, he slits Tazhav's throat, and Bahram breathes his last.

212 *The Confrontation of Tus and Piran across the River Shahd*

Folio 251r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When the defeated Iranians return to the capital, Kay Khusrau will not see them. They beseech Rustam to intercede on their behalf, and he persuades the shah to launch a second campaign against the Turanians. Again, Tus leads the army. When they reach the River Shahd, Tus begins a parley to let the Turanian leader Piran know that he intends to fight them again. Piran responds with peaceful but insincere words, for he has already sent a message to Afrasiyab to raise the army for another war.

213 *The Combat of Tus and Human*

Folio 252v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz and Mirza Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After two days of fighting and the loss of one of their most illustrious paladins, the Turanians are ready for an all-out assault. However, Piran's brother Human persuades them to engage in single combat instead. He then rushes to the center of the field, and Tus comes out to counter him. They fight first with maces, then with swords and fists, until darkness falls and combat is suspended until the next day.

214 *Ruhham Stops the Hand of the Weather Shaman*

Folio 254v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The next day, the Turanians employ a weather shaman, Bazur, to produce snow and ice for the Iranian side only, which impedes the Persians' ability to fight. Ruhham, Gudarz's son, identifies the shaman, who stands on a mountaintop, and rides up to confront him. Ruhham slices off Bazur's magic hand and the weather returns to normal, but even this cannot save the Iranians from defeat.

215 *The Iranians on Mount Hamavan Attack by Night*

Folio 257v
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The Iranians retreat to Mount Hamavan, but the Turanians are camped nearby, so the only course of action is to plan a nighttime siege to pierce enemy lines. Tus, Gudarz, Giv, and Ruhham ride silently onto the plain and take the Turanians by surprise. After a night of fighting, however, the Iranians are forced to return to their mountain hideout.

216 *Tus's Vision of Siyavush*

Folio 259v
Attributed to Qadimi
Collection unknown

The next night, Tus dreams of a throne in candlelight on which Siyavush sits. He advises the Iranians to hold their positions, for they will be victorious. Tus interprets this to mean that Rustam will rescue them and they should prepare to fight another day. The Turanians, how ever, choose to continue their siege without further combat.

217 *Piran Meets the Khaqan of Chin*
Folio 261r
Attributed to Qadimi
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Reinforcements arrive at the Turanian camp from the first of its many allies, the khaqan of Chin, and Piran receives them. The khaqan invites Piran to join him on his throne, where Piran vilifies the Iranians, describing the state of their siege. The khaqan silences his guest, stating that it is time for wine and cele bration, not for making plans.

218 *The Khaqan and Kamus Observe the Iranians*
Folio 263r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The next day, while his troops rest, the khaqan of Chin sets out to observe the enemy. When the Iranians become aware of the vast army of all the Turanian allies, they prepare to engage in another battle. The khaqan notes that the Iranians are stronger than Piran has reported. On the advice of Kamus of Kashan, the Turanians decide to attack the next day.

219 *The Combat of Giv and Kamus*
Folio 265v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz and Mirza Muhammad
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund

As the Turanians mass on the plain below Mount Hamavan, Kamus rides out and begins to shout abuse at his foe. Incensed, Giv takes up the challenge and charges at Kamus, firing a flurry of arrows. Next, Kamus gallops toward Giv, aiming his lance at the Iranian. Giv manages to slash Kamus's lance and it splits in two.

220 *Rustam Expounds on Fate and Death*
Folio 266v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

By nightfall the two armies have withdrawn to their positions, and Rustam finally arrives at the Iranian camp. The grandees gather in a tent lit by a candle to brief Rustam on the nature of the enemy and its allies, especially Kamus of Kashan. They thank God that Rustam has come to deliver them and help them gain victory. He listens in sorrow to the list of the dead and muses philosophically on life and death.

221 *The Combat of Rustam and Ashkabus*
Folio 268v
Attributed to Mirza Muhammad directed by 'Abd al-'Aziz
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.40)

With daylight the battle resumes. Before the armies can clash, Ashkabus rides out from the Turanian side and starts to abuse the Iranians. After Ruhham tries unsuccessfully to shoot Ashkabus with arrows, Rustam enters the fray. He is on foot, having left Rakhsh to rest. He parries the taunts of Ashkabus, then shoots the Turanian's horse with a single arrow. After that, one arrow from Rustam's bow finishes him off.

222 *The Combat of Rustam and Kamus*
Folio 271r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The third day of battle begins with Kamus, ox-head mace in hand, sweeping forth between the two armies and taunting Rustam, who has the audacity to fight on foot. First, Rustam's lance-bearer rides out to challenge Kamus but is thrown to the ground and wounded severely. Then, Rustam speeds forward and lassoes Kamus around the waist, pulling him off his horse. He binds and drags him behind Iranian lines, where the soldiers hack him to pieces.

223 *The Combat of Rustam and Chingish*
Folio 272v
Attributed to Mirza Muhammad and 'Abd al-'Aziz
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Having lost Ashkabus and Kamus, the Turanians send a spy to learn more about the man who has bested them. Chingish volunteers and is soon exchanging insults with Rustam. The arrows he fires have no effect, and when he looks more closely at his adversary, he turns and heads for his own lines. Rustam pursues him, then grabs the tail of Chingish's horse until Chingish jumps off and begs for mercy. In response, Rustam cuts off his head.

224 *Piran Hears Rustam's Terms for Peace*
Folio 274v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

To ascertain the true identity of Rustam, Human slips behind enemy lines and converses with him. Rustam, in turn, demands to see Piran. Convinced that he has met Rustam, Human returns and delivers the message. Aware of the terror Rustam inspires in his enemies, the khaqan encourages Piran to attend the meeting. Although the two champions are courteous, Rustam is ready to wage war unless Piran first allows all those implicated in the death of Siyavush to be punished in Iran, and then settles in Iran himself. The Turanian leader knows that both stipulations are impossible.

225 *Shangul Stirs the Khaqan's Council to War on Rustam*
Folio 276v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.41)

When Piran returns, the khaqan is presiding over a council of the allies. Shangul, the shah of Hind (India), brushes aside Piran's suggestion that they accept Rustam's conditions. Instead he wishes to engage in single combat with Rustam. Meanwhile, Piran and his clan consider Shangul to be foolhardy and prepare to distance themselves from his partisans on the battlefield.

226 *The Combat of Rustam and Shangul*
Folio 279v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

The fourth day of battle commences as before, with taunts, this time between Shangul and Rustam. Then, Rustam lunges with his lance and lifts Shangul before dashing him to the ground. Rakhsh begins to trample him, but before he can finish the job, a group of soldiers rushes onto the battlefield and drags Shangul away to safety.

227 *The Combat of Rustam and Gahar*

Folio 281r
Attributed to Mir Musavvir and Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Once the general battle begins, the Iranians rampage over first the right wing, then the left wing of the Turanian army. One soldier, Gahar, charges directly at Rustam, but when he is close enough to see how big and ferocious Rustam is, he turns and flees back to the Turanian center. Rustam pursues him and spears him in the back with his lance, causing the left wing to collapse.

228 *Rustam Reduces the Fortress of the Cannibal Nation*

Folio 286v
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Following their rout of the khaqan and the other allies of Turan, Rustam and the Iranians press on toward Afrasiyab's capital. On the way they decide to attack the fortress of Bidad, a city of godless cannibals. First, their king confronts Rustam but is dispatched with a blow of the Iranian's mace. Next, Rustam deploys his champions to the four sides of the city walls, which they mine with naphtha and destroy. The Iranians rush in and annihilate the population.

229 *The Combat of Rustam and Puladvand*

Folio 291r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As the Iranian forces advance, Afrasiyab turns to another ally, Puladvand of Kuh-i Chin, to lead the Turanian army. Meeting the Iranians on the battlefield, Puladvand bests Tus, Giv, Ruhham, and Bizhan. He even fights Rustam to a standstill. They decide to wrestle. Rustam picks him up by the neck and throws him to the ground. He turns back to his line, assuming he has finished off Puladvand, but the commander stands and returns to his army. The Turanians retreat, and Rustam leads his victorious army back to Kay Khusrau.

230 *Rustam Pursues Akvan*

Folio 294r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00162)

Rustam answers the call from Kay Khusrau to eradicate an onager that has been attacking a herd of horses and is suspected to be the *div* Akvan in disguise. Rustam finds the onager, but when he tries to lasso it, it disappears into thin air. Eventually the *div* vanishes, but Rustam keeps searching for it. Unwittingly, Rustam lies down to rest near a spring that is the *div*'s lair. When he wakes, the demon has lifted him up on a pad of earth and is threatening to dash him against a mountain or throw him into the sea.

231 *Rustam Recovers Rakhsh from Afrasiyab's Herd*

Folio 295r
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
Private collection

Rustam chooses to be hurled at the mountain, knowing the *div* will toss him into the sea. By the time he returns to the spring, Rakhsh is missing. Rustam follows his tracks and eventually spots Rakhsh in a pleasant valley amid a herd of horses. This is, in fact, Afrasiyab's herd. When Rustam ropes Rakhsh and rides off toward Iran, the whole herd follows, but they are pursued first by the royal Turanian guard and then by Afrasiyab and his paladins.

232 *Bizhan Slaughters the Wild Boars of Irman*

Folio 299r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Part of the long loan of the famous Keir Collection of Edmund de Unger

In the remote land of Irman, a herd of enormous wild boars is destroying fields and flocks. A delegation seeks the help of Kay Khusrau, who offers a reward to the paladin who can rid Irman of this scourge. Young Bizhan eagerly takes up the challenge and departs with Gurgin as his guide. Singlehandedly he pursues the boars in the forest, slicing in two the head of one and intimidating the rest. Thus, Bizhan easily puts them to the sword.

233 *Bizhan Receives an Invitation through Manizha's Nurse*

Folio 300v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab assisted by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.42)

Bizhan's envious companion, Gurgin, suggests they attend a festival near Irman but over the border, in Turan, and abduct the prettiest girls. Bizhan enters a grove alone to spy on the girls, but Manizha, the daughter of Afrasiyab, notices him and sends her maid to learn all she can about him. When the maid reports what Bizhan has told her, Manizha invites him to her tent.

234 *Kay Khusrau Fetes Rustam beneath the Jewel Tree*

Folio 308v
Attributed to Dust Muhammad
David Sofer Collection

When Bizhan does not return, Gurgin concocts an explanation that no one believes. Kay Khusrau gazes into the "all seeing crystal bowl" and learns that Bizhan is imprisoned in a pit guarded by Manizha, whom Afrasiyab has disowned and shamed. Kay Khusrau knows only Rustam can free Bizhan and his beloved. When Rustam joins the shah, a feast is prepared in the royal garden under a tree with fruit made of gems and gold.

235 *Bizhan Slays Human in Single Combat*

Folio 326v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Enraged by the abduction of his daughter and his defeat in the war to avenge Siyavush, Afrasiyab resolves again to wage war on Iran. Ranged on two mountains, the armies face off without fighting for seven days, but on the eighth day Human rides across the plain and challenges the Iranians. Bizhan sallies forth, and the two decide to duel at dawn. They fight throughout the day until Bizhan gains the advantage and beheads his foe.

236 *Bizhan Slays Nastihan and Stems the Turanian Night Raid*

Folio 328r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Private collection

Piran is dismayed and maddened by the death of his brother Human, so he asks their brother Nastihan to stage a night raid on the Iranians. Before the Turanians reach the Iranian camp, they are discovered and a battle ensues. The Iranians quickly gain the upper hand, but then Bizhan shoots Nastihan's horse and, as the animal collapses, smashes Nastihan with his mace and cracks his skull.

237 *Farshidvard Engaged by Bizhan and Guraza*

Folio 336v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After a lull of a few weeks, battle begins again. In response to a Turanian attack on its flanks, the Iranian army strikes at its enemy's center. Two more of Piran's brothers, Farshidvard and Lahhak, fight Giv to a standstill until Guraza, an Iranian, appears and assails Farshidvard. As Guraza raises his mace, Farshidvard pierces his armor with his lance. From behind, Bizhan strikes his foe with his sword, but somehow Farshidvard manages to escape.

238 *Planning for the Joust of the Twelve Rooks*

Folio 339r
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
The Art and History Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (LTS1995.2.49)

In reaction to the stalemate between their armies, Gudarz and Piran hold a parley and agree on a series of eleven jousts to decide the winner of the war. In each camp the commanders choose the ten champions who, in addition to themselves, will joust. As a venue, they select a field between two mounds so that the winners can plant their flags on their respective peaks.

239 *The First "Joust of the Rooks": Fariburz versus Kalbad*

Folio 341v
Attributed to Shaikh Muhammad
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00497)

The first rivals are Fariburz, uncle of Kay Khusrau, and Kalbad, brother of Piran. When the arrows Fariburz shoots at his foe miss their mark, he draws his sword and slices Kalbad in two, from neck to waist. He then ascends the mound and places the first Iranian flag on it.

240 *The Fourth "Joust of the Rooks": Faruhil versus Zangula*

Folio 342r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.43)

The fourth joust features Faruhil, an Iranian champion known for his skill with the bow, against the Turanian Zangula. After peppering Zangula with arrows, Faruhil shoots one that hits both Zangula and his horse, which falls forward, throwing its rider. Zangula falls on his head and dies instantly.

241 *The Fifth "Joust of the Rooks": Ruhham versus Barman*

Folio 342v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.43)

Now Ruhham, son of Gudarz, is matched against the Turanian Barman. At first the champions duck and dodge one another, but soon Ruhham comes from behind Barman, stabbing him in the rear with his lance and polishing him off with a fatal puncture of the liver.

242 *The Sixth "Joust of the Rooks": Bizhan versus Ruyin*

Folio 343r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.44)

In the sixth joust Bizhan, Giv's son, takes on Ruyin, son of Piran. When arrows make no dent in the armor of either soldier, Bizhan steers his horse alongside Ruyin and crashes his mace down on his foe's head. Ruyin remains in his saddle at first but soon falls, his skull smashed to bits.

243 *The Seventh "Joust of the Rooks": Hajir versus Sipahram*

Folio 343v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.44)

The seventh champion, Hajir, another son of Gudarz, is pitted against Sipahram, a famous Turanian paladin. They draw their swords and battle furiously until Hajir strikes Sipahram's head and he breathes his last. Once again a banner is fixed on the Iranian mound.

244 *The Tenth "Joust of the Rooks": Barta versus Kuhram*

Folio 345r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.45)

With the eighth and ninth jousts the results are the same: more dead Turanians and more banners on the Iranian mound. In the tenth contest Barta of Iran and Kuhram of Turan confront one another, swords in hand. With a nimble shift of his horse, Barta cleaves Kuhram in two with his Indian scimitar.

245 *The Final "Joust of the Rooks": Gudarz versus Piran*

Folio 346r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.46)

In the final joust, the two commanders, Gudarz and Piran, meet on the battlefield. After clashing with all their weapons—daggers, maces, swords, and lassos—Piran can feel his luck draining away. Now turning to their bows, Gudarz shoots an arrow that pierces the armor of Piran's horse, which falls on its rider. With a broken arm Piran hastens to a nearby mountain and begins to climb. Gudarz gives chase and Piran hurls his dagger, hitting Gudarz in the arm. At that Gudarz grabs the dagger and throws it back with all his strength, striking Piran in the back and killing him.

246 *Gustaham Slays Lahhak and Farshidvard*

Folio 349v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.47)

Although the commanders have agreed that the victors of the jousts will become the masters of the opposing army, Lahhak and Farshidvard decide to flee. In the Iranian camp Gustaham, who has stayed behind to command the army, volunteers to follow them and bring them to justice. The three meet in a plain, and Gustaham releases a volley of arrows, one of which pierces the skull of Farshidvard. Lahhak now shoots an arrow at Gustaham and hits his mark, but the Iranian draws his sword and stabs Lahhak in the throat.

247 *Kay Khusrau Receives the Turanian Surrender Emissary*

Folio 352r
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Arriving at the site of the jousts, Kay Khusrau prepares to meet with the spokesman for the Turanian army to discuss

the terms of surrender. The Turanian says that he and his men will respect Kay Khusrau's decision, but that none of his soldiers was responsible for the death of Siyavush, which had brought so much grief to his land. Kay Khusrau shows them clemency and allows them to return to Turan, if they wish.

248 *Kay Khusrau Slays Shida in Single Combat*

Folio 360v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Kay Khusrau now resolves to press forward against Turan. His army marches north through the Khwarazmian desert and comes face to face with the Turanian army, which has crossed into Iranian territory. Afrasiyab sends Shida, his son and Kay Khusrau's maternal uncle, to bid for peace or arrange a single combat with Kay Khusrau. Shida and Kay Khusrau skirmish with all their weapons and then dismount and begin to wrestle. Realizing his losing position, Shida prepares to flee, but Kay Khusrau lifts him up and dashes him to the ground, after which he stabs him to death.

249 *The Night Battle of Kay Khusrau and Afrasiyab*

Folio 367v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.48)

With the loss of Shida, Afrasiyab now resolves to send his troops to war against Iran. The Iranians, however, press ahead and take the Turanian capital at Gang. Afrasiyab escapes eastward, where he raises a new army. Returning to Gang, he leads a nocturnal attack, but the Iranians are there to meet their enemy on the battlefield. Amid a sandstorm, Kay Khusrau orders his army to move through the center with Rustam, Giv, Gudarz, and Tus at his sides. Sensing the impending defeat, Afrasiyab flees, and the remaining soldiers surrender.

250 *Kay Khusrau Defeats the Army of Mukran*

Folio 376v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.49)

Afrasiyab's former allies reject him, so he is forced to travel to Gangdizh, a city built by Siyavush on the Sea of Chin, across the desert of Mukran. Kay Khusrau sends envoys to the local king to ask for provisions and safe passage, but the shah of Mukran instead prepares for war. The two sides are at an impasse until Giv rides forth and spears the shah of Mukran with his lance, hastening the end of the war.

251 *Kay Khusrau Slays Afrasiyab in the Name of Siyavush*

Folio 383v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Despite taking his army to the Sea of Chin, Kay Khusrau cannot find Afrasiyab and eventually returns to Iran. The shah journeys to a temple in Azarbaijan to pray for vengeance and learns from a local hermit that Afrasiyab is there, near Lake Chichist. Through a ruse the hermit manages to lasso Afrasiyab and presents him to Kay Khusrau. In his final moments Afrasiyab is still justifying his murderous actions, but Kay Khusrau stands firm and slices off his head.

252 *Jahn Installed on the Throne of Turan*

Folio 385v
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
Private collection

Kay Khusrau orders Jahn—Afrasiyab's surviving son and his own maternal uncle—to be brought before him. He requests that Jahn's shackles be removed and then announces to him that he is being appointed king of Turan. Jahn expresses his loyalty to Kay Khusrau and sets out for his kingdom, where his subjects celebrate his accession and he showers gifts on Gustaham, whose governorship has now ended.

253 *Gushtasp Slays the Dragon of Mount Saqila*

Folio 402r
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00163)

After sixty years of peaceful rule, Kay Khusrau decides to leave this earth. Shah Luhrasp succeeds him. Luhrasp's son Gushtasp, having failed to persuade him to abdicate in his favor, journeys to Rum to seek his fortune. There, he meets the caesar's daughter. Given the choice of a husband, she picks Gushtasp, which displeases her father greatly. Her sisters' husbands are selected by the caesar, who requires them to perform a brave feat. Both suitors ask Gushtasp to substitute for them, and thus he travels to Mount Saqila. As the sun rises over the mountain, a dragon appears. After raining arrows down upon the beast, Gushtasp rams its throat with a dagger and rends its skull with a spear.

254 *Gushtasp Proves His Polo before Caesar*

Folio 403v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The caesar plans a day of horsemanship and contests, including a polo match. Gushtasp's wife thinks he can win back the favor of his father in law with a show of prowess, since his feats for her sisters' suitors have been kept secret. Gushtasp rides onto the field and with one great swing of his mallet hits the ball out of sight, to the amazement of the other players.

255 *Gushtasp Proves His Archery before Caesar*

Folio 404r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.50)

Next, Gushtasp joins the Rumi champions in an archery contest, and his skill catches the attention of the caesar. In a meeting with the caesar, Gushtasp identifies himself and admits that he has performed the feats of valor on behalf of his brothers-in-law. The caesar forgives him and invites him and his wife back to the palace. Privately, however, he worries about Gushtasp's mysterious origins.

256 *Gushtasp Leads Caesar's Army against the Khazars*

Folio 405v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The land of the Khazars abuts Rum, and there is persistent trouble on the border. When the caesar tries to collect tribute, the Khazar chief, Ilyas, declares war against Rum. The next morning the battle commences with the caesar on the right flank, his son on the left, and Gushtasp at the head of the troops, much to the alarm of Ilyas.

257 *Gushtasp Wounds Ilyas, the Khazar Chief*
Folio 406r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The focus of the battle now centers on Ilyas and Gushtasp, who have sped forward with lances and arrows aimed at each other. Ilyas fires his arrows first, grazing Gushtasp, who responds with a jab of his lance that pierces Ilyas's armor. The Khazar falls from his horse, and Gushtasp drags him around the battlefield for all to see before he is taken away and executed.

258 *Jamasp Envisions the Disaster Awaiting Gushtasp*
Folio 413r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Shah Luhrasp has heard rumors that Gushtasp is in Rum, and the shah wishes to find him and abdicate in his favor. Gushtasp is sent as an envoy to the Iranian court and, as an ally of Rum, is crowned shah of Iran. When the threat of war once again arises from the east, Gushtasp summons Jamasp, an astrologer, to determine how the battle will start and end. He prophesies that two of the shah's sons, his brother, and his nephew will all perish, and that only his son Isfandiyar will secure victory for Iran.

259 *Jamasp Arrives before Isfandiyar*
Folio 422r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Gushtasp, who has promised to vacate the throne in favor of Isfandiyar if the Iranians win the battle, retracts his offer and sends Isfandiyar off to command the army and to proselytize the new religion of Zoroaster. Meanwhile, an enemy at court is whispering to the shah that Isfandiyar is plotting against him. Jamasp visits Isfandiyar in the field and informs him of the state of affairs at court, causing a conundrum for the prince.

260 *Isfandiyar Captures Gurgsar in Combat*
Folio 430r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Gushtasp imprisons Isfandiyar, emboldening the Turanians, who sack the city of Balkh and abduct the daughters of the shah. Jamasp crosses into Turan in disguise to bring Isfandiyar back, for only he can save Iran. On the battlefield he cuts a swath through the Turanians. Their commander, Gurgsar, storms out to fight Isfandiyar. Although he shoots an arrow at Isfandiyar's chest, the Iranian lassoes his foe and pulls him off his horse. He spares Gurgsar's life but extracts important promises from him.

261 *Isfandiyar's First Course: He Slays Two Monster Wolves*
Folio 432v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Gushtasp still resists passing the throne to Isfandiyar, now promising it once he rescues his sisters from the Brazen Hold of the Turanians. To reach them, Isfandiyar chooses to take the shortest route, even though it is the riskiest and fraught with daunting challenges. On the first day he confronts two monster wolves with tusks and horns. When the beasts approach Isfandiyar, he first weakens them with arrows, then slashes them with his sword.

262 *Isfandiyar's Second Course: He Slays the Lions*
Folio 433v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

On the second day Isfandiyar enters a lair of lions. First, the male draws near, and Isfandiyar cleaves it in two with his sword. Next, the lioness pounces, but Isfandiyar is again ready with his sword and decapitates it.

263 *Isfandiyar's Third Course: He Slays the Dragon*
Folio 434v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.51)

The third challenge consists of overcoming a dragon that is terrorizing the countryside. Isfandiyar orders a special chariot on which is mounted a box with sharp, protruding blades. He climbs into the box and speeds toward the dragon, who sucks the chariot, horses and all, into its maw. As the blades pierce its throat, it begins to lose strength, and Isfandiyar climbs out and finishes off the monster.

264 *Isfandiyar's Fourth Course: He Slays the Sorceress*
Folio 435v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.52)

On the fourth day Isfandiyar prepares to meet a shape-changing sorceress. He enters a delightful grove of shade trees and streams and sings a love song to draw her out. Soon she appears and drinks wine with the prince. Before she can bewitch him, Isfandiyar slips a powerful amulet over her head, and she reverts to her original hideous form. He then slashes her with his sword, and as she dies, the skies darken and a fierce wind howls.

265 *Isfandiyar's Fifth Course: He Slays the Simurgh*
Folio 436v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab directed by Aqa Mirak
The David Collection, Copenhagen

The following test involves passing the mountain habitat of an evil simurgh, a giant bird that can grasp elephants in its claws. Isfandiyar drives his chariot along the foot of the simurgh's mountain. When the bird swoops down, its wings catch on the chariot's blades, trapping it. When the simurgh is exhausted from struggling and has lost enough blood, Isfandiyar emerges and slices it to bits.

266 *Isfandiyar's Sixth Course: He Comes through the Snow*
Folio 438r
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.53)

Isfandiyar's sixth course consists of a radical change in the weather, from a balmy spring day to a wintry blast of wind, followed by three days of snow. The only recourse is prayer. As soon as Isfandiyar and his men ask the Lord's help, the wind shifts and the skies clear. Three days later they prepare for their last course and depart.

267 *Isfandiyar's Seventh Course: He Crosses the River and Slays Gurgsar*
Folio 439v
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Gurgsar, the Turanian guide, informs Isfandiyar that the final challenge will be to cross a vast, waterless desert. Isfandiyar instructs his men to leave all their heavy gear behind and to take extra water instead. However, instead of a desert they come upon an enormous, impassable river. Gurgsar admits his deception, but Isfandiyar offers to free him if he directs the Iranians to the concealed ford in the river. Gurgsar shows the army the way across the river, but that evening, when he reveals his continuing loyalty to Turan, Isfandiyar cleaves him in two.

268 *Isfandiyar Slays Arjasp and Takes the Brazen Hold*

Folio 442v
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

At last within reach of the Brazen Hold, Isfandiyar concocts a plan to enter as a merchant. He gives a banquet for the unsuspecting Turanians and then lights a bonfire, a signal to his troops outside the fortress. When the Turanians realize the enemy is at its gates, their army rushes onto the plain. Meanwhile, Isfandiyar storms the palace, freeing his sisters and engaging their captor, Arjasp, in a duel that ends with Arjasp's death and beheading.

269 *Rustam Kicks Aside Bahman's Boulder*

Folio 451r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
Private collection

Isfandiyar returns to Iran in triumph, but Gushtasp still refuses to hand over the throne. Gushtasp commends his son, noting that he is the only person apart from Rustam who could have performed such feats. Then he sets another impossible task for Isfandiyar: to bring Rustam back in chains. Isfandiyar's son Bahman serves as the envoy to Rustam, locating him hunting in the mountains. As Rustam cooks an onager on a spit, Bahman rolls a boulder down the mountain, hoping it will finish him off before Isfandiyar has to fight him. Warned by his brother Zavara of his impending doom, Rustam laughs and kicks the boulder away.

270 *Rustam and Isfandiyar Begin Their Combat*

Folio 461v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.54)

After a lengthy discussion of Gushtasp's demands of Rustam and his and Isfandiyar's obligations to the shah, they decide to resolve the disagreement through combat. Fighting first with lances, they parry and pierce each other's armor until the lances fall apart. They then turn to their swords but again succeed only in breaking each other's weapons. So it goes with maces and hand combat as well, and by the end of the day, neither has the upper hand. They decide to rest.

271 *Rustam Slays Isfandiyar*

Folio 466r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.55)

In another confrontation Rustam and Rakhsh are injured and retreat. Now Zal intervenes and summons the simurgh, his foster mother, who provides healing feathers and a special arrow. Once again Rustam and Isfandiyar meet in single combat, but this time, though Isfandiyar's arrows miss their mark, Rustam's pierce the prince's eyes. As Isfandiyar lies dying, both he and Rustam know that this murder, no matter how it was provoked, will bring trouble down on Rustam's head.

272 *Rustam Avenges His Own Impending Death*

Folio 472r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.56)

Rustam has a half brother, Shaghad, who lives in Kabul, where his father-in-law is king. Both Shaghad and the king hate Rustam and devise a plan to bring him to Kabul and kill him. They dig a number of hidden pits and line them with spears, then invite Rustam to go hunting. He and Rakhsh fall into one, where they are both impaled. Dying, Rustam asks Shaghad for a bow and arrow in case lions should attack. Shaghad obliges and then hides behind a nearby tree when Rustam strings the bow. With his dying breath, the old hero pulls the string and lets fly an arrow that pierces the tree and kills Shaghad.

273 *Faramarz Encircled While Battling Bahman*

Folio 475r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.57)

Despite Rustam's having vowed to protect Bahman, once Bahman accedes to the Iranian throne, he resolves to attack Zabul, the seat of Rustam and Zal, in retribution for the death of Isfandiyar. The Iranians arrive in force, pillaging Zabul and plundering its treasure. Bahman orders Zal enchained and continues to fight. Faramarz, Rustam's son, arrives with reinforcements but eventually, badly wounded and surrounded by Iranians, he is hanged and riddled with arrows.

274 *Sikandar Attends the Dying Dara*

Folio 486r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Following the Iranian defeat of the caesar of Rum, Shah Darab marries the caesar's daughter. Soon the couple divorce and she returns to Rum, without Darab's knowing that she is pregnant. She gives birth to a son, Sikandar, who becomes crown prince of Rum. Darab remarries and his wife bears a son, Dara, who is crown prince of Iran. When Sikandar refuses to pay Iran tribute, a war begins, resulting in Sikandar's conquest of Egypt, Iraq, and Iran. In the end two of Dara's ministers turn on him and mortally wound him. Sikandar rushes to the place where he lies dying. Cradling the shah's head in his lap, he reveals that they are half brothers.

275 *Sikandar Slays Fur and Conquers Hind*

Folio 496r
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After securing Iran, Sikandar turns his army to Hind and its powerful leader, Fur. On the second day of battle, the two leaders engage in single combat. Despite the disparity in their sizes—Fur is gigantic, Sikandar slim and small—Sikandar roars into action, splitting Fur in two. A fierce battle ensues, but Sikandar and his men are victorious. Even so, Sikandar is warned not to be dissatisfied with what he has won and to desire more.

276 *Sikandar Builds the Wall against Yajuj and Majuj*

Folio 507v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Sikandar continues his passage through all the lands of the world. He arrives at the city of Yajuj and Majuj, beset by creatures with fangs, giant ears, and blue hair. The notables of the city ask Sikandar to protect them from this scourge. With the help of the city's inhabitants and men from every trade, he constructs a giant wall of stone and metal stretching from one mountain to another.

277 *The Aging Firdausi Eulogizes Sultan Mahmud*

Folio 513v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Private collection

Here, Firdausi breaks off from the narrative to deliver a diatribe, followed by a panegyric to his patron, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. In the diatribe he bemoans the passage of time and his growing infirmity, which he blames on the heavens. The heavens reply that all of this is the design of the Lord, who sets the course for the universe. The panegyric praises Mahmud's intelligence, likens him to Shah Nushirvan, and claims that his association with Firdausi's *Shahnama* will ensure his reputation for magnanimity throughout history.

278 *Ardashir and the Slave Girl Gulnar*

Folio 516v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir
Dated A.H. 934/A.D. 1527–28
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

Dara's son leaves Iran to live in Hind, where his descendants subsist as shepherds. One member of this line, Sasan, returns to Iran and marries the daughter of the governor of Istakhr, who bears him a son, Ardashir. He in turn joins the service of the king, Ardavan. At his court a slave girl, Gulnar, enjoys the king's attention and affection, but when she spies the handsome Ardashir, she falls in love. One night she fixes a rope to a wall and lowers herself into his room. He wakes to see her lovely face.

279 *Ardashir's Victory over Bahman*

Folio 519r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

After his father's death, Ardashir returns to Istakhr to claim the governorship, but Ardavan has awarded the title to his own son, Bahman. Ardashir marshals an army to take on Bahman. A great battle ensues, and to Ardashir's aid comes a powerful ally, Tabak of Jahrum. A dark cloud settles overhead. Bahman sustains many wounds and flees, while Ardashir rides into Istakhr the victor.

280 *The Story of Haftvad and the Worm*

Folio 521v
Ascribed to Dust Muhammad
Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 00164)

One day the daughter of Haftvad rescues a worm she finds in an apple. She exclaims that it will give her luck and enable her to spin more thread than her friends. Each day she feeds the worm and spins more and more thread. Her father abandons his other work and devotes all his time to the care of the worm, which brings him and his town wealth and power. To counter this town's independence, Ardashir, disguised as a merchant, enters the town, befriends the worm's keepers, and feeds the worm molten lead. Haftvad is executed, and Ardashir takes control of the town.

281 *Prince Shapur I Meets the Daughter of Mihrak*

Folio 527v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Worried about his succession, Ardashir learns that he has a son, Shapur, by a wife he has rejected. In the absence of any other sons, Shapur is made crown prince, and the king wishes to choose a wife for him. His astrologer advises that Shapur marry the daughter of Mihrak, who betrayed Ardashir in the battle with Haftvad. He wishes to have the girl killed, but instead Shapur encounters her by chance when he stops at a well, where she speaks sweetly to him and demonstrates her special strength in lifting the bucket of water. Shapur arranges their wedding then and there.

282 *Hurmuzd I's Last Testament to Prince Bahram I*

Folio 535r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.58)

Shapur and Mihrak's daughter have a son, who rules as Hurmuzd I, a just and prudent king. When he grows old and death is upon him, he calls for the crown prince Bahram I and exhorts him to rule with moderation.

283 *The Coronation of the Infant Shapur II*

Folio 538r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.59)

A later shah, Hurmuzd II, dies without an heir. Fortunately, one of the women in his harem bears a son whom the head court magus names Shapur II. In the celebration of the baby's coronation, a golden crown is suspended over the golden throne, and the boy is placed on the seat of his predecessors.

284 *Caesar Captive before Shapur II*

Folio 543r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.60)

Shapur II travels incognito to Rum, where he gains entry to the caesar's court. He is found out and imprisoned by the caesar until, with the help of a slave girl, he escapes and returns to Iran. While Shapur was imprisoned, the caesar had invaded Iran, so Shapur now gathers an army to win back his capital. There, in a surprise attack, the Iranians defeat the Rumis and take the caesar prisoner. Shapur enters the city in triumph and orders the caesar brought before him. After rebuking him, Shapur requests the release of all prisoners, compensation for damages, royal hostages, and the mutilation of the caesar's ears to make him look like an ass.

285 *Ardashir II's Accession to the Throne*

Folio 547r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Ardashir II succeeds his brother Shapur II at an enthronement ceremony where he voices his desire for peace and harmony. He states his intention to rule on behalf of his young nephew, Shapur III, until the child reaches maturity. He rules equitably for ten years, keeping Iran secure, avoiding punitive taxes, and being a man of his word.

286 *Bahram Gur Takes His Harpist Hunting*

Folio 550v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

A son, Bahram, is born to Yazdigird I, a tyrannical, unjust ruler. The magi fear the boy will fall under his father's influence and send him to be reared in Arabia. When the slave girl Azada, a harpist, goes hunting with Bahram, he asks her which of two gazelles she would like him to shoot. Opposed to the idea of hunting gazelles, she replies that he would be a true champion if he could turn a buck into a doe, a doe into a buck, and pin the hooves of the third animal to its ears. First, Bahram shoots off the antlers of the buck; next, he aims two arrows at the head of the doe; and finally, he grazes the ear of a gazelle. When it lifts its hoof to scratch its ear, he pins its hoof to its ear.

287 *Bahram Gur before His Father, Yazdigird I*

Folio 551v
Attributed to Dust Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.61)

Munzir, Bahram's Arab host, sends a painting of him to his father, Yazdigird I, who is so struck by his son's handsome physique and hunting prowess that he asks Munzir to send him to Iran. Bahram arrives and greatly impresses his father with his manly appearance and proper demeanor. Yazdigird then calls Bahram into his service night and day, a situation that eventually causes Bahram to return to Arabia.

288 *Yazdigird I and the Water Horse That Killed Him*

Folio 553r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait

A magus prophesies that Yazdigird I will die at the fountain of Sau, near Tus. In turn, Yazdigird resolves never to go there. Fate intervenes in the form of a royal nosebleed for which the only remedy is the waters of Sau. Yazdigird makes the pilgrimage, and as soon as he douses his face in the waters of the fountain, the nosebleed is cured. At that moment a powerful wild stallion emerges from the waters and, resisting the attempts of the shah's herdsmen to catch him, allows Yazdigird to saddle him—but then gives the shah a lethal kick to the head.

289 *Bahram Gur Negotiates for the Throne*

Folio 555v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Following the death of Yazdigird I, the Iranian nobility decides that none of his descendants shall succeed him because his reign has been so evil. Instead they appoint one Khusrau from a branch of the ancient Kayani line. Upon hearing this, the Arab king Munzir mounts an army to invade Iran in support of Bahram. When they arrive in Iran, a delegation of grandees comes to parley. Bahram, looking and sounding every inch a king, presses his birthright to rule and renounces the ways of his tyrannical father.

290 *Bahram Gur Slays the Lion and Mounts the Throne*

Folio 557v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As the discussion of who will succeed Yazdigird I remains gridlocked, Bahram suggests a contest. The royal throne will be placed in an open space with the crown on its seat and two lions chained to it. Bahram goes first, ox-head mace in hand. As he approaches the throne, one of the lions breaks loose, but Bahram brains it with his mace. The second one lunges, but once again the mace prevails. Bahram then mounts the throne.

291 *The Shoemaker Who Rode a Lion*

Folio 563r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

In response to the death of one of his subjects while drunk, Bahram forbids the drinking of wine. A year later the mother of a shoemaker who cannot consummate his marriage prescribes three cups of wine for what ails him. Not only does the wine work in the bedroom, but the next day, while he is still drunk, a royal lion escapes from its keeper, and the shoemaker jumps on its back and rides it like a horse.

292 *Bahram Gur Pins the Coupling Onagers*

Folio 568r
Attributed to Mir Sayyid 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.62)

In the springtime Bahram goes hunting and comes across a meadow overrun with onagers. It is the mating season, when stallions compete for mares. When Bahram sees one male onager mounting a female, he lets fly an arrow that pins the two together. This show of prowess earns him the name "Onagers' Bahram," or Bahram Gur.

293 *Bahram Gur Applies the Sword to Lion Hunting*

Folio 573r
Attributed to 'Abd al-'Aziz directed by Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Having decided to devote two years to the joys of feasting and hunting in advance of turning forty, Bahram organizes an enormous hunt in an area populated by lions and onagers. Fearlessly, Bahram rides into the lions' lair and, instead of shooting arrows, draws his sword, slicing through one lion's head and cutting its mate in two.

294 *Bahram Gur Advances by Stealth against the Khaqan*

Folio 577v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.63)

As the news spreads of Bahram's decision to choose the pursuit of pleasure over the responsibilities of governing, the khaqan of Turan and Chin resolves to invade Iran. As a ruse, Bahram announces his plans to travel to a fire temple near the western frontier. In his absence, the notables offer the khaqan tribute in exchange for safety from invasion. The khaqan is pleased by this and unaware that Bahram and an elite force of soldiers are traveling at speed toward Marv, where the khaqan's army is stationed.

295 *The Khaqan Captive before Bahram Gur*

Folio 578r
Attributed to Qasim ibn 'Ali directed by Mir Musavvir
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.64)

The khaqan has moved most of his army to a plain near Marv, not suspecting that an Iranian assault is imminent. At day-break, three days after his troops reach Marv, Bahram leads them in a surprise attack on the khaqan's army. In the rout

that ensues, Bahram's commander takes the khaqan prisoner and parades him before Bahram.

296 *Bahram Gur Slays the Rhino-Wolf*
Folio 586r
Attributed to 'Abd al 'Aziz directed by Aqa Mirak
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.65)

Bahram has subdued the lands to the east of Iran and receives tribute from Rum. The only threat to his kingdom is Hind and its shah, Shangul. Rather than fight a war, Bahram travels to Hind in the guise of an envoy. Bahram so impresses Shangul that he asks the envoy/shah to rid a nearby forest of a ferocious monster, the rhino wolf. Deep in the jungle Bahram encounters the beast and without delay unleashes a hail of arrows that precedes the coup de grâce, delivered with his sword.

297 *Yazdigird II Accedes to the Throne*
Folio 592r
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.66)

Shortly before his death Bahram hands over the throne to his son Yazdigird II. The new shah mounts his throne and summons the grandees of the realm. Addressing them, he notes the deleterious effects of envy and related sins such as greed and irresponsibility. He pledges to rule justly and is true to his word for the eighteen years of his reign.

298 *Sufaray's Victory over the Haital*
Folio 595v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.67)

Following the death of Shah Piruz at the hands of the Haital Turks and their leader, Khushnavaz, the shah's young son Prince Balash accedes to the throne under the regency of the paladin Sufaray, who raises an army to avenge the death of Piruz. They march into Transoxiana and waste no time entering the fray against the Turks. When the Turks realize they have lost the battle, they turn and are pursued by Sufaray.

299 *Nushirvan Promulgates His Reforms*
Folio 602v
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.68)

In the reign of Shah Qubad, a new religion is promulgated by Mazdak, and the shah insists that his son Nushirvan adopt it and renounce the teachings of Zoroaster. A public debate exposes the weakness of Mazdak's ideas, and he and his followers are executed. Upon taking the throne, Nushirvan reforms the taxation system so that land, not crops, is assessed. The taxes will be paid three times a year and recorded by the chief scribe.

300 *Nushirvan Stopped by a Water Trench before Halab*
Folio 611v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

When the old caesar dies, Nushirvan offers generous support to his young successor, but the message is met with scorn. Nushirvan then rallies his troops, and the armies of Iran and Rum converge on Aleppo. The caesar's forces dig a trench, which they fill with water to keep the Iranians at bay. Even so, the caesar eventually surrenders, and his envoys apologize for his incomprehension of his role as a vassal of the shah.

301 *The Rebellion of Nushzad, Son of Nushirvan*
Folio 615v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Nushirvan has a Christian wife who gives birth to a son, Nushzad, who refuses to follow the Zoroastrian religion. The boy and his mother are banished to the city of Jund-i Shapur, a Christian stronghold renowned for its medicine and prisons. At the word that his father is ill, Nushzad rebels, and Nushirvan sends his army to quash the revolt, asking that his general Ram Barzin spare his son. Nushzad fights valiantly, but as he pierces the Iranian lines, he succumbs to a hail of arrows.

302 *Buzurjmihr Appears at Nushirvan's Fifth Assembly*
Folio 622r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.69)

Nushirvan employs seventy sages, including Buzurjmihr, who as a boy had distinguished himself as an interpreter of dreams. The shah invites his sages to a banquet where each is to discuss a topic of interest. Six more gatherings follow on the first, and at the fifth of these, Nushirvan poses the following to his sages: Which ethic underpins the power of organized religion and the power of the throne? Buzurjmihr responds that reason and knowledge are the main components of this ethic.

303 *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the Khaqan*
Folio 629r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of the 1989 Collectors Committee (M.89.55)

The khaqan who controls most of Turan plans to fight the Haital Turks and seeks an alliance with Nushirvan to eradicate their common enemy. Seeing the threat that both the Turanians and the Haital pose to Iran, Nushirvan refuses to sign a treaty with either side. Instead he moves his army to Gurgan. Realizing that peace is the only option, the khaqan sends an embassy to Nushirvan confirming his people's wish for concord with Iran.

304 *Nushirvan Greets the Khaqan's Daughter*
Folio 633v
Attributed to Dust Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.70)

As security for their peace treaty, the khaqan sends another embassy to Iran and offers a Turanian princess as a bride for Nushirvan. The shah agrees, but only if he has the pick of the khaqan's five daughters. Although the khaqan tries to trick the shah's emissary, Mihran Sitad, he chooses the youngest, most noble and comely daughter to be Nushirvan's bride. The Chinese beauty captivates the shah with her moonlike face and musk-scented locks.

305 *Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the King of Hind*
Folio 638r
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
The Ebrahimi Family Collection, courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (ELS2010.7.3)

Nushirvan receives word from his agents that an embassy from the king of Hind is proceeding to his court. The ambassador presents first mounds of gems, then elephants, earrings, and parasols. Next, boxes of gold and silver, aromatic substances, and weapons are brought forward. Finally, after the room has been cleared, the envoy proffers the game of chess, unknown in Iran at that time.

306 *Buzurjmihr Masters the Hindu Game of Chess*

Folio 639v
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.71)

With the chess game comes a challenge: if the shah cannot determine the rules, he will have to pay tribute to the king of Hind. If he can learn to play the game and beat the envoy at it one week later, the king of Hind will pay tribute to Iran. No one can decipher the mysteries of the game until Buzurjmihr arrives to study it. An audience is called, and Buzurjmihr takes his place at the chessboard across from the envoy. Understanding it as a game of war, he places the pieces correctly and beats the envoy at his own game.

307 *The Battle That Ended in Checkmate and Chess*

Folio 643v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Chess originated in Hind, where a queen has two sons, Gav and Talhand, one of whom will inherit the throne. When the queen's advisers suggest corulership by the two princes, conflict results and one brother vows to fight the other. The two armies clash at dawn. Eventually the elder brother's force wins, but again the younger prince presses for war. This time he dies in combat, and his mother accuses his brother of killing him. To prove his innocence, he re-creates each move on the battlefield with special pieces on a board, ending with the word "checkmate," meaning "the king dies."

308 *Burzuy Brings Nushirvan the Book "Kalila and Dimna"*

Folio 649r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar (MS.7.2006)

Burzuy, a doctor at the court of Nushirvan, travels to Hind in search of a miraculous plant. When he fails to find it, he is introduced to a sage who suggests he will gain a deeper understanding of life by reading a book called *Kalila and Dimna*. Burzuy is forced to memorize it and to send his transcriptions to Nushirvan. Upon Burzuy's return to Iran, Nushirvan offers him whatever he wants from the treasury. In addition to one royal robe, Burzuy asks to write a preface to Buzurjmihr's translation of *Kalila and Dimna*.

309 *Nushirvan Records His Counsel for Hurmuzd*

Folio 654r
Attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali
Private collection

Nushirvan assembles his advisers and dictates his proclamation that his son Hurmuzd will be heir to the throne. He advises his son to be fair with his subjects, fight his enemies without restraint, employ men of wisdom, respect the pious, and be prudent with the treasury.

310 *Nushirvan Responds to Questions of the Grand Magus*

Folio 655v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The grand magus puts thirty-one questions to Nushirvan. One concerns two men praying to God, each for something he wants. One gets his wish and the other does not. Commenting on why that should be, Nushirvan notes that excessive desires lead to unhappiness.

311 *The Great Sage Questions Hurmuzd before Nushirvan*

Folio 658v
Attributed to Dust Muhammad
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

As an old man Nushirvan contemplates the choice of his successor. To confirm his inclination to have Hurmuzd, his eldest son, follow him, Nushirvan gathers sages to question the prince. The queries take the form of philosophical and ethical problems, and the conversation continues all day and into the night. Finally, having passed the test, Hurmuzd receives his father's blessing.

312 *Bahram Chubina Slays Sava-Shah in Battle*

Folio 671v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran

Despite his promise, Hurmuzd has an evil character and assassinates all the leading figures from his father's court. Although he repents, within a decade Iran is beset by enemies from all sides. One sage who has not been killed prophesies that Khaqan Sava Shah will sweep all the lands from Iran to Yemen, but an Iranian paladin, Bahram Chubina, will save Iran. Despite being wildly outnumbered, Bahram's army meets that of the khaqan in battle, and with one perfectly aimed arrow, Bahram shoots and kills the khaqan.

313 *Khusrau Parviz Cuts Down a Rebel Pursuer*

Folio 690v
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Bahram Chubina claims descent from the Askani dynasty and maintains that Khusrau Parviz is from an illegitimate line. Both leaders plan a surprise attack at night, but Khusrau's scheme is discovered, so he retreats with a handful of advisers and watches as his sleeping army is struck by a large cadre led by three Turks. Khusrau waits until dawn and rides down the battlefield, where he deals decisively with one of the Turks. However, he flees when Bahram arrives.

314 *The Envoys of Khusrau Parviz before Caesar*

Folio 698v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Khusrau Parviz's only chance to hold Iran is to secure the help of the caesar. He flees across the Euphrates, while Bahram Chubina occupies his capital. Envoys for Khusrau journey to the caesar's court and are admitted to an audience with him. As the adviser Kharrad Barzin approaches the caesar with the letter Khusrau has sent him, the caesar offers him his seat while ordering chairs for the other Iranians. Kharrad Barzin declines this offer, noting that he has come in service to Khusrau.

315 *Kharrad and the Weeping Statue*

Folio 702r
Attributed to Aqa Mirak
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The Iranian mission succeeds, and the caesar offers to assist with men, money, and weapons. To test the five envoys of Khusrau Parviz, the caesar orders a statue

of a woman, dressed virtuously, who weeps constantly and occasionally bows in greeting or wipes her eye with her hand. Each adviser is "introduced" to this woman, said to be the heartbroken daughter of the caesar, and none can cheer her up. Finally, Kharrad Barzin enters her chamber and observes her closely. The very woodenness of her pose and sameness of her tears reveal to him that she is only a statue.

316 *Khusrau Parviz's Charge against Bahram Chubina*

Folio 707v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.72)

Eventually a large army from Rum joins Khusrau Parviz and his Iranians and marches toward Azarbaijan. After a Rumi hero dies on the first day of battle, Khusrau decides to take a small band of Iranians with him the next day. Although Bahram Chubina enters the fray with only three soldiers, he puts Khusrau and his men to flight.

317 *The Angel Surush Rescues Khusrau Parviz from a Cul-de-sac*

Folio 708v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.73)

Bahram Chubina chases Khusrau Parviz across a plain until Khusrau reaches a mountainside, where he dismounts and starts scrambling up a path. As Bahram gains on him, Khusrau prays to the Lord. In an instant the angel Surush appears and lifts him to safety.

318 *Bahram Chubina Slays the Lion-Ape*

Folio 715v
Attributed to Mir Musavvir assisted by Qasim ibn 'Ali
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.74)

After the final battle between Khusrau Parviz and Bahram Chubina, Bahram's army defects and he seeks refuge in the land of the khaqan. He ingratiates himself with his host by offering to deliver him from Kappi, the lion-ape, which has devoured the daughter of the khaqan. Near the mountain lair of the monster, Bahram draws the beast out and shoots three arrows, then pierces its side with a lance and slices it in two with a sword.

319 *Bahram Chubina's Sister Slays the Khaqan's Brother*

Folio 721v
Attributed to Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Khusrau Parviz arranges the murder of Bahram Chubina, but as he is dying, he tells his sister Gurdiya that she should lead his troops back to Iran and make peace with Khusrau. Meanwhile, the khaqan asks Gurdiya to marry him, a proposal she declines. As Gurdiya leads her troops toward Iran, the khaqan orders his brother, Tuvurg, to give chase with his army. He locates Gurdiya and she convinces him to meet in seclusion from their armies. There, she challenges him and spears him with her lance before leading her army to victory.

320 *Barbad the Concealed Musician*

Folio 731r
Attributed to Mirza 'Ali
The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (MSS 1030)

Khusrau Parviz presides over an ever more glorious court, which attracts musicians such as the little-known Barbad. Refused entry into the court, Barbad befriends a royal gardener, who lets him into the area where the shah will celebrate Nauruz, the Persian New Year. Barbad conceals himself in a tree and at sundown starts to play his lute. Khusrau twice orders his servants to find the musician, without results. A third time, the shah mentions the rewards he will give the minstrel, and Barbad tumbles out of the tree.

321 *Rebels Defeat the Guard of Khusrau Parviz*

Folio 735r
Attributed to 'Abd al Vahhab and Bashdan Qara
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

Late in his reign Khusrau Parviz becomes unjust, and Iran suffers hard times. The caesar is threatening the capital, and rebels are conspiring against the shah in favor of his eldest son, Shiruya, who has been imprisoned by Khusrau for many years. The rebels plan to free Shiruya but first they encounter Khusrau's commander and guards, and a three day battle follows. By the fourth day the commander is dead and the troops are dispersed.

322 *The Assassination of Khusrau Parviz*

Folio 742v
Attributed to 'Abd al-Samad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.75)

While Shiruya, whose real name is Qubad, is being freed, the rebels surround Khusrau Parviz's palace. With Shiruya/Qubad's consent, the rebels identify an assassin, Mihr i Hurmuzd, and give him access to the shah's quarters. The shah's horror at this man, a barefoot drifter, only adds to the gruesomeness of the scene in which Khusrau is stabbed to death.

323 *The Coup against Usurper Shah Farayin Guraz*

Folio 745v
Attributed to Dust Muhammad
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.76)

After seven months Shiruya/Qubad is poisoned and the rebels enthrone his younger brother Ardashir III, who also is murdered after six months. Next Farayin Guraz, the former general of Khusrau Parviz, takes the throne, but soon a soldier shoots an arrow in his back, taking his life. Three women then sit on the throne in succession, and finally a Sasanian prince, Yazdigird III, accedes to the throne. Soon the Arab army of Caliph 'Umar invades Iran, and the reign of the shahs ends with the murder of Yazdigird at Marv.

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ISBN 978-0-300-19454-8
9 780300 194548
PRINTED IN SPAIN